TRAITS OF NATURE,

BY

MISS BURNEY.

SECOND EDITION, IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

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MISS BURNEY,

AUTHOR OF

CLARENTINE, GERALDINE FAUCONBERG, &c.

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There are a sort of men, whose visages
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond;
With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit;
———— I do know of these,
That therefore only are reputed wise,
For saying nothing.

Merchant of Venice.

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TRAITS OF NATURE.

CHAPTER I.

REQUITAL.

To Lord Ennerdale, the mystery of Adela's sudden change of countenance was amply explained by the vision of the tall stranger. He lived too much in the world to be unacquainted with the person of Mr. Cleveland, though the confirmed antipathy between himself and Julius had precluded the slightest approach towards any species of intercourse with that young man's father.

It was, however, to the Earl, a matter of some surprise, (well as he was aware, from the frank communications of Mr. Somerville, of Adela's total banishment from her paternal home during so long a period), that she should thus instantly recognize him in

the midst of so numerous an assembly: but when he reflected upon the extraordinary family resemblance subsisting between Mr. Cleveland, his son, and the General, the wonder ceased, and he readily admitted, that it was scarcely possible an observer who was interested in the scrutiny, could be mistaken in his identity.

Conscious that the dismay with which she found herself an object of such strict examination, was increased by his vicinity, Lord Ennerdale, ever attentive to her feelings, considerately arose, and sauntered in an indirect line towards the spot where Jemima was still volubly conversing with her uncle. She was insensible of his approach till he stood within two or three paces of her; when, instantly checking the rapid tide of her elocution, and colouring violently, she hastily turned aside her head, and affected not to see him.

Already but slenderly disposed to think well of her, this manifest embarrassment, amounting almost to a look of guilt, confirmed Lord Ennerdale in the belief that he had interrupted her in the prosecution of some malignant purpose. On perceiving

him, the severe brow of Mr. Cleveland was contracted into a permanent frown; he regarded him for a moment with haughty surprise, as if questioning by what right he adventured so immediately within the influence of his eye-shot—and then walked sternly away.

Lord Ennerdale, half smiling, now drew still nearer to Jemima, and standing so immediately opposite to her that she could no longer avoid looking at him, he quietly, but significantly said—

"Why do you deny all notice to a friend when he approaches you, whom, at a distance, you thought worthy to engage so much of your attention? Have you been reporting of me any evil, or are you apprehensive I should read your delinquency in your eyes?"

This frank and unexpected attack at first heightened the discomfiture of the amazed Jemima to an excess almost intolerable: but recovering in a few moments her wonted intrepidity, and glad of any opportunity of saying to him a civil thing, she answered, with great softness—

"I believe, my lord, you are pretty well

convinced, that from me you have no delinquency to apprehend of the nature you speak of. But, at all events, I am a gainer by your mistrust, since it has brought you to defend your character in person."

"It would go to my heart," replied he, bowing, yet regarding her with an air extremely incredulous, "to deny implicit credit to so flattering a speech: but the trite truism that *facts are stubborn things*, is not, you will allow, easy to be confuted; and what fact was ever plainer, than that, whilst you were conversing with Mr. Cleveland, he directed his observation with marked displeasure towards the place which I occupied. Whence arose that displeasure? And how came you, my avowed champion, to let it acquire such ascendency?"

There is nothing that more completely disconcerts the artful and treacherous than being dealt with so fearlessly and plainly. An insinuated suspicion may be evaded: but how repel a direct impeachment—an open and honourable application for honesty and candour?—Jemima never underwent greater perplexity in her life!—Every

feature was in agitation—her very fingers-ends partook of the unconquerable embarrassment that overwhelmed her, and with nervous restlessness sought occupation in drawing her gloves on and off, or in adjusting the ornaments of her dress.—Lord Ennerdale beheld, but felt no pity for the confusion he had excited; and, after a short pause, thus went on—

"If Mr. Cleveland's obvious discontent was occasioned by viewing the indulgent attention with which his daughter did me the honour to listen to me, why should you have hesitated to assure him, from your perfect knowledge of my character, that I certainly was infusing into her mind no principles of filial rebellion—no perilous doctrine of any description?—That my discourse was, doubtless, as unprejudicial to *her* morals, as I am persuaded you have always found it to *yours*?—Why did you not vouch, on the testimony of my past, for my present and future good behaviour? Do you think yourself the only young lady I would spare, were I inclined to hold dangerous language, or to offer up insidious incense?"

Much distressed what to answer, yet obliged, when he paused, to attempt saying something, Jemima stammered out—

"It was the first time my uncle had beheld Adela for many years, and—and, perhaps, the view of her, holding such ready and social conference with one known to be upon terms not—not very friendly with her brother, might give him—might dispose him, to feel some degree of anger."

"And would his anger extend to you, were he to observe our present dialogue?"

"No, I do not imagine it would."

"And why? Are not the associates encouraged by a niece, in high favour, of more importance to him, than those of a daughter whom he neglects and discards?"

"He cannot suppose, that whilst my own parents are living to direct me, I should much attend to the admonitions or prejudices of an uncle invested with no authority to controul me!"

"There seems to me but little difference in the privilege to assert her independency of a daughter so long denied all paternal protection, or of a niece so happily possessing it! But to speak very seriously. Be

assured, and faithfully communicate what I am saying to Mr. Cleveland—that every time I am admitted to the society of the ladies of his family, I find the prevalence of their amiable qualities diffuses through my mind such a disposition to concord and reconciliation, that I am induced to look up to him with respect for being their parent—and to extend good-will even to his son, for bearing in his countenance so striking a resemblance to them."

Jemima tried to dress her face in smiles of approbation at this language, and was preparing a panegyrical answer, when Mrs. Erington came up, to say that their carriage had been called—

"And do, my lord," added that lady, "spare me the trouble of collecting the rest of the party. Go in quest of Barbara, and of my sister."

He immediately obeyed the mandate. Barbara, he found in the midst of a dissertation on some controverted point in Sanchoniathon's Phœnician History with an old Scottish Antiquarian; and after waiting some time to let the debate conclude, pro-

ceeded with her towards the place occupied by Adela, well pleased—(the awe which she had shewn of her father, considered)—that he was provided with a female companion to attend her across the room.

In silent and deep dejection, Adela rose to comply with the long-wished-for summons. Mr. Somerville joined her before she reached her sister, and leaning on his arm, after they had all assembled, she was advancing with the rest towards the door, when Mrs. Erington suddenly stopped, exclaiming—

"I protest, there's my father!"

Adela had no courage to look up, but she heard Mrs. Erington the next moment, cheerfully and fearlessly address him: she heard him answering her in a tone of cordiality:—both her cousins ran up to him, to shake hands and bid him good-night;—and Mr. Somerville himself, disengaging from her his arm, deserted her to perform the same ceremony. The consciousness, that she alone was an interdicted, a rejected being amidst so many connections, none nearer in consanguinity than herself, totally overpowered her;—she burst into a passion

of tears, and flew towards the stairs to escape the more speedily from so cruel a trial!

Lord Ennerdale, quick as lightning followed her. His heart bled at sight of her uncontroulable distress: he whispered words of the softest consolation, and was drawing her arm within his own to conduct her to the carriage, when, gently disengaging herself, she found voice to say—

"I fear I am doing wrong to accept your kindness at such a moment. Do not be offended—do not think me ungrateful—but let me entreat that you will return into the concert-room."

"Ask me not to leave you, my beloved Adela;—I find it impossible! You are in sorrow;—if I cannot dispel, let me at least share your disquiet—and whatever heart denies you justice, oh, that you could find some solace from remembering, that in mine you reign almost to the exclusion of every other inmate!"

"I find in that conviction," said the weeping Adela, softened beyond the power of concealment, "the only consolation of which I could at this instant be susceptible.

Oh, Algernon! through life, how partial and how generous a friend have I ever found you!"

Transported by her kindness, he uttered, in a low voice, the most fervent acknowledgments—soothed, encouraged, and supported her, disarming of half its bitterness the anguish by which she was oppressed, and converting the tears hitherto drawn from her by affliction, to tears of thankfulness and sensibility.

Mr. Somerville and the ladies at length joined them, and they all descended to the carriage. Lord Ennerdale placed Adela within it, and then, followed by her secret blessings, took his leave.

During the whole way home, she never spoke a word. Her heart was oppressed, and her eyes were every moment ready to overflow. But Jemima, though she imagined that it might be somewhat hazardous, in the presence of Mr. Somerville, to torment Adela with remarks on her exit from the concert-room, had not resolution to forbear animadverting on the long dialogue which she had held with Lord Ennerdale in

the recess of the window. Mrs. Erington, self-persuaded of her sister's *invulnerability*, as she termed it, laughed at these insinuations; whilst Mr. Somerville too fervently wished that the attachment which they implied might be real, to feel any disposition to controvert them. Thus left to her own disquieting suggestions — incensed against Lord Ennerdale—doubtful what steps would be pursued by Mr. Cleveland—enraged by the passive silence of her detested rival, Jemima grew sullen, disdained to speak, even when asked a question, and quitted the carriage at her father's door, in a frame of mind which the bitterest of her ill-wishers might have felt some disposition to commiserate.

Adela was rejoiced that Mrs. Somerville, by having retired before their return, was spared the uneasiness of beholding the disturbed and harassed looks with which she reached Cumberland Place. But the next morning, she held with her a long and confidential dialogue, in the course of which, she fully confided to her all the mortifying particulars which she had overheard respecting Lady Rosalvan's marriage—and all the

grief and consternation with which the chilling, and apparently resentful observation of her father, had struck her heart.

The kind and zealous Elinor most warmly entered into every feeling that she expressed. Her terror, lest the disapproving aspect of Mr. Cleveland should induce Adela to repulse Lord Ennerdale with renewed and more than former coldness, was extreme. She supplicated her to guard against the encroachments of timidity; averred, in the most positive terms, her full conviction that the addresses of Lord Ennerdale, if encouraged by herself, would never be rejected by her father; and, with all the energy of anxious affection, exhorted her, under domestic circumstances in many respects so distressing, not to throw away the power of securing a protector so honourable—so every way entitled to her confidence and attachment.

The secret of Adela rose to her lips, and embracing Mrs. Somerville, on whose shoulder she sought to hide her glowing cheeks—

"Oh Elinor!" exclaimed she, in a voice scarcely audible, "I last night endured, in

their fullest degree, the opposite extremes of happiness and sorrow!"

She was proceeding—but the entrance, at that moment, of Mr. Somerville, drove back to the recesses of her own heart, the confession that was irresistibly escaping her.—Her sister looked all impatience for a fuller explanation; but Adela whispering to her an earnest supplication to be silent, she made a painful effort to suspend all enquiry till they should once again be left to themselves.

Having answered Mr. Somerville's enquiries after her health, and satisfied him that she was perfectly recovered from the indisposition of the preceding night, Adela entreated him to accompany her to the lodgings of William Hampden and his pretty bride. It was a visit which she felt reluctant to pay with any of the *pomp and circumstance* of equipage and servants; and Mr. Somerville, ever ready to oblige her, consented with alacrity to be her escort.

On arriving at a small house in Dorset Street, the lower part of which was occupied by the proprietors of a very scantily-furnished haberdasher's shop, having knocked repeat-

edly without effect at the private door, Adela and her companion were compelled to enter the shop and ask within it, whether Mrs Hampden was at home.

A pert, laconic answer, implying that she did not know, was muttered to this question by a true tawdry Londoner, a girl vulgarly fashionable, who came forth from a little back-parlour, stared boldly at the two inquirers, and seemed much inclined, from no ostensible cause, to treat them with impertinence.

"Will you have the goodness," said Adela, "to endeavour to find out whether we can be received?"

"We have nothing at all to do with our lodgers," cried the repulsive young lady: "there's a private door which you may go round to."

"The private door," said the good-humoured Somerville, "is also a silent door, we have knocked at it several times, and nobody has answered us."

"I suppose the servant girl is out. Well, then, you may go up stairs through the shop. You must tap at the first door you come to

on your left; that's the room where they generally sit."

Adela approved this measure for Mr. Somerville, but objected to it for herself.

"I had rather not go up," said she, "till quite certain that my visit is well timed. Mrs. Hampden may be engaged—she may not like being thus taken by surprise: do you precede me, therefore, my dear brother, and if you find her disposed to receive us both, come and let me know.—I shall be here making a few purchases."

This declaration she hoped, would ensure her some civility—and Somerville entertaining the same expectation, left her.

Soon after his departure, a man extremely well dressed, but whose air, confident and presuming, was calculated to excite reserve, unexpectedly issued forth from the same little back-room whence the young apprentice had made her appearance, and stationing himself behind the counter, snatched up a roll of ribbon, and smirking facetiously at Adela, begged to have the sole honour of measuring it for her—

"So pretty a customer," he added, "should not be waited upon by an insensi-

ble female!—I shall be proud, Ma'am, to serve you—whether, for the rarity of the thing, you pay ready money, or, as most ladies do, *go tick*."

Disgusted by the man's familiarity, but concluding that he belonged to the shop, Adela coldly answered—

"As my business, Sir, is nearly over, I shall have no occasion to trouble you."

"Trouble, beauteous lady! ah, be assured, you can inflict upon me no trouble but by refusing my humble services. I am a novice, fairest lady, in the art of recommending purchases, but, when near you, every thing recommends itself. See how well this colour suits, and, if possible, sets off, the dazzling brilliancy of your complexion;—try but, on those delicate hands, the elastic texture of these gloves;—behold this wreath—"*its flowers less blooming than your face*," sue to approach that charming brow:—oh, there let it rest, for there—"*it ne'er will withered be!*"

Amazed, angry, and almost frightened, Adela drew back, saying with all the haughtiness she could assume—

"I am not here without protection, Sir,

and if you address to me such strange discourse any longer, you will oblige me to call down the gentleman with whom I came."

"Call, fair barbarian!—Nay, if thou wilt, call even

> ———*'Spirits from the vasty deep!*
> *'But will they* COME *when you do call for them?'*

"This is quite intolerable!" cried she, advancing a few steps towards the door which led to the staircase: but the man, darting from behind the counter, and intercepting her progress, flung himself theatrically before her upon one knee, and in a whining tone of mock humility, called out—

> *'Fairer than tongue can name thee, let me have*
> *'Some patient leisure to excuse myself.'*

Adela now seriously alarmed, as well as insufferably provoked, regarded him a moment with a mixture of indignation and wonder, and then said—

"I am totally at a loss to understand on what pretence you think yourself authorised to treat me in so extraordinary a manner.—Be assured, Sir, that such conduct will not

fail to be resented as it ought by those with whom I am connected."

The girl behind the counter, at these words, no longer confining herself to a silent simper, laughed audibly; and Adela's incorrigible tormentor, nothing daunted by the rebuke which he had received, burst forth into fresh heroics, and gazing at her with real or pretended admiration, exclaimed—

> *'Oh, what a deal of scorn looks beautiful*
> *'In the contempt and anger of that eye!'*

Reflecting, with increasing dismay, upon the conduct of this man's impertinent female associate, as well as upon the insolence of his own, the frightful idea now occurred to Adela, that she had incautiously exposed herself to insult in a house of ill-repute. The thought no sooner struck her, than turning hastily round, she seized upon the lock of the street-door, and was impatiently endeavouring to open it, intending to run out of the shop, when the stranger springing forward, arrested her efforts, grasped her hand, and with undiminished effrontery, smiling in her face, cried—

'*Oh, fairest beauty, do not fear or fly;*
'*Stay—for I have no power to let thee pass;*
'*My hand would free thee, but my heart says—no.*'

Trembling, and sick with terror, yet anxious not to desert herself, Adela, with quivering lips, but affected courage, said—

"I *insist* upon being immediately suffered to pass! I could not have believed, that in a house of apparent respectability, and in the presence of a young woman whose own interest ought to render her desirous of behaving with propriety to those who enter her shop, I incurred any risk of being molested in so unpardonable a manner!"

'*Sweet saint, for charity, be not so curst!*' resumed the impenetrable stranger—"those lips, so fresh, so rosy, and so youthful, were made—'*For kissing, lady, not for such contempt!*'"

The free look with which these words were quoted, corresponded so alarmingly with the freedom of their meaning, that Adela, growing desperate of escaping personal indignity, unless she made some vigorous effort for her own liberation, suddenly

and dextrously pushed him aside, and turning the lock with the rapidity of thought, darted into the street.

The man, half laughing, half enraged, rushed after her. She heard his odious voice, his dreaded step close behind her—and flying impetuously forward, she scarcely knew whither, had nearly attained the end of the street, when impeded by the extended arm of some person, whom, in her rapid course, she had, unconsciously, almost run up against—

"Let me pass—let me pass!" cried she, wildly endeavouring to insinuate her slender form between this new interrupter and the rails of a house near which he had stopt—"I am pursued—I *must* get away—I *must* run on!"

"Pursued!" repeated a well-known voice that instantly brought comfort to her heart—"By whom?—Wherefore?—Look at me, dearest Adela—look at me, and dismiss these fears!—Can you distrust," added he, with a smile, "the valour of a champion so interested in protecting the treasure he holds dearest upon earth!"

"Oh, no, no;—I feel that I am safe—I

feel delighted at this meeting!" cried she, panting for breath, but recovering to a full sense of security—

"I am most happy to hear you say so," resumed Lord Ennerdale—"take my arm, and let me have the pleasure of attending you wherever you purpose to go."

Adela looked round, to ascertain what was become of her recent persecutor. He had stopt short on seeing her detained and addressed by a gentleman who appeared to know her, and now stood still at some little distance, as if waiting to observe how the interview would terminate.

"As I have found so good a defender," said she, at length, "I feel no scruple in going back to the house whence I this moment fled. But promise me," she added, "to enter into no altercation with the person who alarmed me. Be my guardian from future disturbance, but not the avenger of that which is past."

"Yet, tell me, of what nature was that disturbance? Who inflicted it? Was it the man whom I see watching us from yonder crossing?"

"Trouble not yourself about that man,

or any other man!" cried Adela, hastily taking his offered arm, "come with me, and remember, that you are not to lose sight of me an instant!"

"Oh, that *you* would remember," exclaimed he, pressing the hand which rested upon his arm, "never to withdraw so grateful, and so sweet a charge!"

They now walked on, and as they proceeded, Adela, whose thoughts were full of her recent adventure, said, "Can you explain to me, by what infatuation William Hampden chuses to reside in lodgings so every way improper for his young wife?"

"Do you mean on account of their obscurity? Ah, my lovely friend, to one in William's circumstances, that would be their principal recommendation."

Adela now explained herself, and stated that there seemed some reason to distrust the good character of the people of the house.

"You must surely be mistaken," cried Lord Ennerdale, much surprised, "I yesterday saw the mistress of this little mansion, and she appeared to me a perfectly creditable and inoffensive person. What

reason have you had to judge of her otherwise?"

Perceiving that the man who had so insufferably molested her was gone completely out of sight, Adela ventured to recount the whole of her adventure, and was listened to with an indignation and amazement not to be described!

After assuring her, however, that the young woman who had abetted the stranger's impertinence with such callous derision, was not the proprietor of the shop, but the daughter or niece of the person who kept it, the Earl added—

"Why, my too cautious Adela, did you defer the relation of this tale till the man whose insolence so loudly called for chastisement had disappeared? You cannot suppose, that with so contemptible an adversary, I should have made of this what is called an affair of honour?—The only thing to have done with him, would have been to have broken a switch across his shoulders!"

"And whilst that amusing operation was performing," said Adela, "you would have left me standing in the street, as spectatress of the sport?"

Lord Ennerdale laughed, but assured her, that he would have provided for her the best accommodations to witness the transaction, which, on such short notice, he could have obtained.

They were now arrived at the door of the shop, and on entering it, perceived Mr. Somerville, red with anger, vehemently interrogating the young woman on the subject of the lady he had brought with him.

The girl, though still inveterately pert, seemed half frightened, and whilst strenuously disclaiming all knowledge of the lady's motive for so abruptly departing, repeatedly declared, that for any advantage gained by her as a customer, she might as well never have entered the shop.

"Here are all the things," continued she, "which she pretended to buy, still lying unpaid for on the counter; and, I suppose, the pleasure of selling them as remnants, is the only reward I shall have for my trouble."

"But did she leave for me no message? Did she go away alone, and on foot?"

"She went away with a gentleman," said the girl, spitefully enjoying his perplexity,

"I can tell you no more about her, if you was to make ever such a rout!"

"Girl, girl," exclaimed Mr. Somerville, extremely irritated—"it is more probable that your insolence drove her away in disgust—perhaps in fear! You deserve the severest reprehension for the gross incivility of your behaviour from the instant we entered your paltry shop; and it would be doing you no more than justice, publicly to expose your misconduct in the newspapers!"

The appearance, at that moment, of Adela herself, put an end to the menaces but too justly incurred, which the angry Somerville was pouring forth. He flew towards her, and the young woman, not much elated on seeing her return, slunk into the little parlour, and left the shop clear to its unwelcome occupiers.

Adela eagerly enquired what had detained her brother-in-law so long in William Hampden's apartment?

After congratulating himself on beholding her so safely escorted, he answered—

"At the moment I went up, the poor fellow was preparing to undergo, from his

new surgeon, a minute examination of his ill-healed arm. Of course I concluded, on hearing this, that it would be proper to take an immediate leave: but Mrs. Hampden, pale and trembling, supplicated me to remain a few minutes in the adjoining room. Her maid, she told me, had unfortunately been sent out on a distant errand; the mistress of the house was likewise absent, and if her husband should faint under the practitioner's hands, she distrusted her own ability to administer to his recovery as she ought.—She therefore implored me to grant her the consolation of knowing that there was at least one human being near her who felt for her poor William's sufferings, and who would enable her to support her own terrors with more resolution.—What could I oppose to such a request? In truth, I had no heart to resist its urgency a moment. Yet, deeming the immediate vicinity of a chamber of such anguish, an unfit spot for my kind Adela, I rather chose to leave her, somewhat longer than she might expect or wish, to her own conjectures, than expose her to grieve and tremble with the affrighted Mrs. Hampden."

"Oh, you decided most considerately and wisely!" cried Adela.—"But how did our unfortunate William endure the surgeon's scrutiny?"

"With the most manly fortitude of mind, but—debilitated as is the state of his frame—the most alarming and frequent symptoms of bodily exhaustion. The inspection was peculiarly severe; I was forced to issue from my retreat, and to exert myself at once to revive the drooping wife, and to sustain the half-expiring husband. It was a scene the most trying I ever encountered; yet, shall I always rejoice that I so opportunely presented myself where my services appeared so acceptable, and where two such interesting creatures seemed so totally abandoned in the hour of trial to their own worn-out strength. The surgeon, when this first painful duty was over, spoke with cheerfulness of his patient's speedy prospect of entire recovery; and gave the languid young man the highest credit for his noble endurance of the torture to which he had been obliged to put him."

"It was my intention in coming hither," said Lord Ennerdale, "to have asked for

admission to the invalid: but perhaps, after all he has undergone, it may be better to leave him to repose."

"I am decidedly of that opinion," cried Mr. Somerville—"to-morrow is the soonest that he will be capable of conversing with any ease."

"Then let us hasten away," said Adela;—"We are keeping possession of a place where we may be called upon, by some straggling customer, to weigh out pins, and measure laces. Which of you two gentlemen would make the most adroit man-milliner?"

"To a lover of good bargains," cried Mr. Somerville, "I should indubitably prove much the most acceptable person to deal with;—since, without an instant's hesitation, I would dispose of the whole stock in trade, here collected, and of the young lady at its head, precisely for their genuine value—that is to say—for nothing!"

Whilst he was yet speaking, the real owner of the shop, the person of whom Lord Ennerdale had made such favourable mention, came in, loaded with bandboxes

and parcels, but smiling and civil, though evidently much fatigued.

The Earl, perceiving that she mistook them for purchasers, and was getting ready, with no little speed and bustle, to serve them, hastened to undeceive her. He told her they were friends of Mr. and Mrs. Hampden; informed her of the trying operation which the former had just gone through, and recommending that the house should be kept as quiet as possible for the rest of the day, said that he felt assured she would render every service in her power to her youthful tenants during a period of such suffering—

"That I will indeed, Sir," cried the good woman, with promptness—"my heart has ached for them many a time, poor souls, since they first came into this house! And I hope they have always found themselves treated with proper respect. They are as good lodgers as ever I had in my life; as punctual as the day in their payments, and as quiet as mice."

"They speak with infinite gratitude of your attention...."

"But here is a lady," interrupted Mr. Somerville, "who has by no means the same reason to speak favourably of the civility of your young shop-woman."

Adela would now have interfered to prevent the accusation he was about to make: but Lord Ennerdale besought her not to oppose his purpose, and even joined in the censure which her brother-in-law had begun—

"It is reciprocally the interest of seller and buyer," said he, "that good manners as well as good measure should be dealt between them. A little lesson to this effect, could it be duly impressed, might produce some reformation in the impolitic assistant, who, by her rudeness, drives away those whom the civility of her principal would attract."

He then recounted as much of the scene which had passed in her shop, as was sufficient to convince its mistress of the justice of his expostulation.

"Ah, lord, Sir,'' cried she, as soon as he had ended, "it's all along of the airs my crazy nephew puts into her head, that the girl behaved so unbecomingly. Here, Nan-

cy," added she, calling in great wrath to the shrinking culprit, "come and ask pardon of this lady for your impertinence! Come this moment, you young torment!"

Slowly and reluctantly the crest-fallen damsel emerged from her lurking-place, and her angry employer then went on—

"I warrant, Norris has been here again this morning!—He'll bring you to ruin, girl, and me to distraction!—You were idle and perverse enough in all conscience before he came, and I wish with all my heart, he had never found his way to the house! Speak, statue! Wasn't it him who treated this lady so rudely whilst you stood by and laughed? Shame on you! Is this the way to bring a good name to the shop? Is this the way to gain friends and credit in the world?"

The name of Norris struck a chill to the heart of Adela, and filled her with dismay. She took hold of Mr. Somerville's arm, and drawing him towards the door, said—

"Let us go—let us go, my dear brother! —I have heard enough upon so disagreeable a subject."

"Well but, ma'am," resumed the wo-

man, anxiously following her, "I hope you don't go away quite lastingly affronted! I assure you, I am exceedingly ashamed and sorry for what has passed. But, dear me, ma'am, how could I help it?—Here's my nephew, a wild, foolish chap, newly married to a fine quality widow, a Lady Somebody, whose head he turned by his nonsensical poetry and stuff;—and she leaves him master of his time and money to come up and play the deuce here in London;—and somehow, he ferreted me out, (I was his father's sister) and he spends half the day in talking a pack of rubbish to this vain girl, whilst I am forced to be trudging about the town, waiting upon my customers. And, bless you, ma'am, how is it to be wondered at, he should be listened to by such a poor ignorant thing, when he has had the art to wheedle himself into favour with an accomplished, clever lady, like the one he persuaded to marry him?—I am sure I never was so surprised in all my whole life, as when I first heard that Bob had raised himself to such preferment;—for though he has tried a little of every thing, I must own, that I never thought he

would find the means of trying the life of a gentleman!—Dear, I wish I could think of his lady's name!—Can't you recollect it, girl?"

"Yes," answered the malicious personage thus unfortunately applied to—"her name is Rosalvan,—and that young lady is her daughter;—Mr. Norris knew her the moment she came into the shop."—

Adela, at these words, hiding her face in her handkerchief, fled into the street with as much precipitation as when pursued by Norris himself. Mr. Somerville and the Earl, exceedingly concerned, instantly hurried after. The latter gently drew her arm within his own, and for some time, they all walked on in silence.

At length, Adela, uncovering her streaming eyes, said in an accent the most dejected—

"Oh, Lord Ennerdale—am I—thus degradingly connected—am I worthy to be the object of your choice?"

"You are worthy," cried he, with an enthusiasm wholly irrepressible, "to be the chosen mistress of an empire!—Whatever I hear, whatever I behold, of a nature

to give you unmerited pain, serves but to increase my impatience to hasten the time, when it may become my province to secure you from a recurrence of such harassing trials!—Adela—dearest Adela—I must speak unreservedly to Mrs. Somerville this very day—I must solicit the exertion of her influence over your father, to procure for me the blessing of speedily calling you mine for ever!"

"What a moment," cried the agitated Adela, "to make so generous a proposal! —Oh, think of this hateful alliance formed by my unhappy mother! Think of the disgrace which it reflects upon me!—Wherever I go, allusions to her disastrous story haunt and distress me. My father, by appearing to disown me, casts a stigma upon my birth—my title to the name I bear is questioned—I have no appropriate rank in society—I am a rejected, unvalued being, who can bring into no family either honour, wealth, or even the negative advantage of an undisputed descent!"

She had spoken in so unguarded a tone that Mr. Somerville, who unavoidably overheard the substance of all she said, was

preparing with great earnestness to answer her, when Lord Ennerdale anticipated him, and warmly replied—

"What are all these accidental circumstances of your situation to me?—You still are Adela—the Adela I love as my own soul! On whom I rest my fondest hopes of happiness through life!—I married once with every promise of earthly prosperity held out to my view. Birth, fortune, interest, and splendid connections, made of the union into which I then entered the most brilliant I could have contracted. What did these vain accessaries to felicity produce?—It is not for me to tell you, Adela, how futile, how insufficient I found them to ensure even resignation!—Ah, now—at a maturer period of my existence, let me form an engagement dictated solely by the affections of my heart!—Let me chuse a friend, a companion on whom I can rely for every social, every endearing quality:—one who will be a protectress to my children, and the ornament and delight of their father's blissful home!"

"Can you, Adela," cried Mr. Somerville, who had rapturously attended to this

speech, "can you resist so eloquent a pleader?"

"Rather ask me," she blushing, yet frankly answered, "how I shall subdue my own repinings, should such pleadings be resisted by my father!"

"He cannot,—he will not be so great an enemy to you, and to us all!—We will unite in our application to him,—we will allow him no peace, no respite till his consent is obtained!—My good little Adela, dismiss these vain apprehensions: be confident, be cheerful, for this match *must* take place!—I shall lose my senses if it fails!"

"Are they not," said Adela, half smiling, "a little gone astray already?"

"Oh, be as saucy as you will—say any thing to me—do any thing with me—I allow and forgive it all, on condition you allow me, six weeks hence, to give you joy as Lady Ennerdale!"

The Earl, delighted at his cordial friendliness, thanked him in the most animated terms; and then Mr. Somerville, no longer able to suppress his curiosity, said,

"When was it, Ennerdale, that you were fortunate enough to prevail on this fair

paragon of female discretion to acknowledge, that she had a heart?"

"Its capture," cried he, gaily, "except by presumptive evidence, I have not even yet obtained assurance of!—But when a man is permitted, unreproved, to talk of his love, it is seldom, I suspect, for the gratification of any other feeling than vanity, that he is very hasty and importunate in soliciting a formal avowal of reciprocal tenderness. Adela heard me declare the sentiments she had inspired, with so much sweetness, that she put to flight all terror of her disapproval; and I have been too grateful and happy to ask for more."

CHAP. II.

PROHIBITION.

They were now arrived at Mr. Somerville's door, which was no sooner opened, than that gentleman, hastily preceding his two companions, ran up into the drawing-room, impatient to communicate to his wife the discovery he had just made of the good understanding subsisting between Adela and

the Earl. He found her, as he wished, alone: but in evident dejection, and with eyes which betrayed that she had recently been in tears.

Before she could reply to his alarmed interrogations, Lord Ennerdale and her sister entered.

An explanation now took place, the most unpleasant to all parties.

Mrs. Somerville, in the absence of her husband and Adela, had received a letter from her father; she pointed to it with looks of deep concern, and desiring them to read it, drew Lord Ennerdale to a window, to inform him of as much of its contents as she thought it necessary that he should know.

Mr. Cleveland began by saying, that he concluded it was needless to state his reasons for not calling in Cumberland Place: they were such as Mrs. Somerville might easily conjecture. He congratulated her, however, on the birth of her son, and expressed his good wishes, with something approaching to paternal affection, for both mother and child.

He next adverted to the information

which he had received of the assiduous visits at her house of Lord Ennerdale, and of the admiration which he was reported to evince for her youngest sister. With the former part of this intelligence, he admitted that he had nothing to do: she and Mr. Somerville were, of course, at liberty to receive, as often as it suited them, whoever they pleased: but, with the latter part of the communication, he acknowledged himself much dissatisfied. He had, the preceding evening, witnessed enough to amply convince him, that the intercourse he alluded to was of no accidental or unmeaning nature; and he now wrote to express his decided and unalterable condemnation of the intimacy which he had seen so unequivocally manifested. He proceeded to pronounce, that Adela must give no further countenance to the attentions of a man from whom he was so entirely averse; she must abandon all idea of accompanying Mr. and Mrs. Somerville into Northumberland —into the neighbourhood of Mordington Castle; and if, whilst the Earl yet remained in town, that lady and gentleman chose, as usual, to admit him daily, it

was his especial desire that their young guest should return immediately to the abode of Dr. Hampden. This decision, he added, was not to be shaken; and as the present was the first instance of his interference in her sister's concerns, he begged it might be the last time he should have occasion to speak upon so unpleasant a subject.

At the end of this peremptory mandate, was subjoined an invitation to Mr. and Mrs. Somerville and Alicia, to dine with him the first day they were all disengaged.

Adela, though not, perhaps, the most surprised of any present at a letter so every way cruel, was completely thrown off her guard by its perusal, and (her spirits already harassed by the incidents of the morning) had no sooner finished it, than a deep sigh forced its way from her heart, and a shower of tears gushed from her eyes.

Lord Ennerdale flew to her. At once elated and depressed on beholding an affliction so flattering to him as a lover, so painful as a friend, he took her hand, and pressed it with fondness, though in silence, to his heart.

Mrs. Somerville, in the midst of her own

disquietude, seemed surprised at the passive sanction which her sister gave to a freedom so new in Lord Ennerdale, and so little according with the general reserve that had subsisted between them—

Her husband read the sentiments which her looks expressed, and hastily cried out—"My dear Elinor, she loves him! An explanation has, at length, taken place, and she does all the justice to her old friend Algernon, that we so long have wished! But is it not a circumstance of peculiar infelicity, that at this very juncture a prohibition so stern should arrive to harass and perplex them?"

Mrs. Somerville embraced her sister with an air of mingled pity and congratulation, saying—"Shall I complain, dearest girl, of the reserve with which you have treated me? or shall I indulge myself in owning, how sincerely I admire the wisdom and self-command which you have so happily known how to blend with such unsuspected sensibility?"

Then addressing the Earl, she added—"I have told you enough, Lord Ennerdale, of this distressing letter, to entitle me to your opinion how to answer it. Need I

declare how sincerely it grieves me? Or how joyfully I would pursue any measure likely to procure a repeal of the interdiction it contains?"

Lord Ennerdale paused for some seconds—looked agitated and irresolute, and, at length, answered—

"Let me but obtain the permission of Adela to act as if this letter had never been received, and I will yet venture to hope, that something auspicious may be effected by an immediate application to Mr. Cleveland, from myself, either in person or in writing. *You* shall decide, dear Mrs. Somerville, which method it will be wisest to adopt."

"In this case," cried her husband, earnestly, "be advised, Ennerdale, by *me*. Seek no interview. Mr. Cleveland is austere, and difficult to conciliate. An answer to your proposals (even favourable) might not be very graciously accorded—a definitive rejection would probably be accompanied by such harshness as you would find it very painful to bear."

Adela now raising her tearful eyes, and looking at Lord Ennerdale, said—"Ought I not to exhort you to renounce so hopeless a

pursuit? Is it pardonable—is it generous in me, to suffer you to expose yourself to so probable a chance of incurring a repulsive failure?"

"It is at least not generous, beloved Adela, to hold to me such language! You should rather encourage by approbation the step I am about to take. From *your* father, I can endure much:—fear nothing from our correspondence, whether it be verbal or written. The reward I have in view will stimulate me to an exertion at once of patience, of urgency, which no coldness, no rebuff, at the outset of the negociation, shall induce me to suspend. Look smilingly, then, my Adela, on the enterprise,—bid me depart, and prosper,—and all will—all must end well."

She made a faint effort to regard him with a more cheering aspect, and giving him her hand, answered—

"I little merit that you should undertake for me such a task: but, as you bid me, I will say;—Go, and may success attend you!"

"The purest blessing of Heaven reward you for the kindness of that little sentence! —My heart's dear Adela, farewel!—Fare-

wel, my ever-friendly Mrs. Somerville.—You shall hear from me shortly.—Write not, speak not, take not any step in the affair till you see me."

Then, hastily shaking hands with Mr. Somerville, he snatched up his hat, and ran out of the house.

A general silence for some minutes succeeded his departure. Adela was the first to speak—

"I could not bear," said she, despondingly, "to appear insensible of his generous eagerness: but I have a strong internal conviction, in defiance of his sanguine prognostics, that all this will end unhappily!"

"I trust not, my dearest sister," cried Mrs. Somerville, anxious to revive and give her confidence.—"Recollect how favourable a circumstance is the absence from town at this critical moment of the irreconcileable Julius. It leaves my father at liberty to attend more impartially to the voice of reason; and will give us all more opportunity to back Lord Ennerdale's cause with the zeal which it deserves. Dearest Adela—submit not without some effort!—I recommend not—Heaven forbid I should—daring opposi-

tion, and open defiance:—but beware of being too yielding—too easily panic-struck.—And above all, my sweet sister, let nothing induce you to utter any rash promises of unconditional and perpetual renunciation. Time conquers all difficulties.—Prejudices may relent—animosity may subside—pride may be softened—every thing, in short, may be vanquished but the obligations imposed by solemn, though unguarded vows."

To these friendly exhortations, Adela was unprovided with any answer. She entertained higher notions of paternal authority than many, perhaps, who have been from infancy habituated to live under its controul. All that related to the reciprocal obligations of parent and child, she considered with a species of solemn reverence which gave to the subject peculiar power over her imagination. An altercation with her brother might have concerned, yet (violent as she knew he could be) would have had not the smallest effect over her sentiments and actions. But to resist the positive behests of a father!—Adela recoiled with affright from the mere idea:—she knew that her courage would be unequal to performing such a part

—and she felt that her principles ought to oppose even the very wish that her courage were greater!—Yet without a struggle, to renounce Lord Ennerdale;—to suffer the prospects of her whole life to be tinged with gloom and hopelessness;—and to repay with cold and heartless timidity the disinterested attachment she had inspired!—The alternative between such a mode of conduct, and the disobedience which its reverse would demand, was truly dreadful to her: and never were hours so apprehensively and painfully spent, as those that intervened between the Earl's departure, and the moment when he again, on the following day, made his appearance.

She was alone to receive him, Mrs. Somerville having just left her, and Alicia, who was a tardy riser, not being yet descended from her room.

His aspect, as he approached her, told, without words, a tale of the blankest disappointment, and the severest mortification. Adela's heart sunk at the sight; she had no voice to utter a single enquiry:—dismayed, pale, motionless, she looked at him in silent sorrow—and her foreboding fears whispered

—"He comes to tell me, we are for ever parted!"

Lord Ennerdale, who, after precipitately advancing towards her on first coming in, had abruptly turned away, and paced the apartment in disordered haste, incapable of announcing the tidings he brought, now again drew near her, and mournfully said—

"I am despotically, and vindictively rejected, my Adela!—Your father—your implacable father, refuses me all sanction,—robs me of all hope!—Oh, that I had never risked your happiness by a perseverance in those assiduities which have gained me a place in the heart I am now compelled to forfeit;—Adela—sweetest Adela, if I have made you too deep a participator in my wretchedness, how shall I ever forgive myself!"

"Think not of me," cried she, in a voice of kindness, whilst vainly endeavouring to restrain her tears—"think only how best to support your own share in this heavy blow. I ought not so long to have accepted your attentions;—their motive, I will not deny, was often suspected by me. It was inconsiderate, it was cruel to permit them,

distrustful as I have ever been of my dreaded father's sentence."

"Adela," resumed the Earl, sitting down beside her, "for worlds would I not propose to you an act of filial defiance—a breach of positive duty!—But, my own love, there is a promise which, if you refuse to give, you will drive me to desperation!"

"Explain yourself," cried she: "it revives me to hear, that there is any thing which I can do, consistently with my obligations as a daughter, capable of soothing your regret."

"Oh, Adela!" exclaimed he, "this exquisite kindness at once softens and aggravates all I suffer!—Yet, do not withdraw it—do not think me so mad as to misprize it—so wayward as to demand severity and coldness! Oh, no,—I could not now bear from you a look, an accent, a single expression of harshness or insensibility!—But, adored Adela—hear my supplication. It is, that you condemn me not to the misery of apprehending, that by absence and silence I may be driven from your remembrance. Pledge to me here your solemn faith to accept no other proposals during the space of

a year from the present moment—and wherever you may be, permit my writing to you, and engage to answer my letters."

"The first of these requests, I unhesitatingly comply with: the second, you must allow me time, a little time, to deliberate upon. Do not look hurt," added she, seeing him change countenance at her irresolution; "I have no motive for refusing an immediate assent to your wishes, which is not as much the result of consideration for your peace as for my own. If, finally, we *must* part, why should I add to the anguish of that parting by maintaining a correspondence so calculated to enfeeble our courage, and to nourish deceitful hopes?—Besides—I may, on this head, receive a formal prohibition, and in that case how shall I bear to forego an indulgence—for such I have no scruple in owning it would be to me—which habit would have rendered so essential to my repose?"

"This calm and frigid reasoning, Adela, dismays me! Have I deluded myself in trusting too implicitly to your love?—Your countenance, full of sympathy and softness, divests me of every doubt;—the happy self-

possession with which, at a moment like the present, you can foresee every difficulty, and anticipate every objection, confounds and distracts me! Accuse me not of inconsistency; I thought indeed, that to contribute to your unhappiness would heighten all my own;—but I now experience, that to suffer singly, would surpass in misery every other possible degree of torment!—Adela, take pity on my feelings; shew less fortitude in resigning me, or I shall be possessed of none!"

Adela looked up with a forced and melancholy smile, and said—"If your fortitude is to be proportioned to my weakness, heroic indeed will it be! Fear not that I shall be too enviably exempted from all share of pain.—This blow, though perhaps it comes upon me with more preparation than upon you, strikes me with but little less severity.—We are all too prone to flatter ourselves that what we anxiously wish, however improbable its realization, may by some unforeseen and mysterious means, be attainable. From the moment my—vanity must I call it?—taught me to discern your attachment, I have been wavering between hope

and fear as to its result;—hope, however, preponderated. I thought that, independent of the gratification to my father's ambition of receiving for me such honourable proposals, his too well known repugnance to me would induce him to rejoice at being thus permanently released from the burthen of bestowing upon me any future care.— My expectations, in both cases, have been deceived—and amply do I now pay the penalty of having ever ventured to indulge them."

Struck and penetrated by the sensibility which this speech so ingenuously evinced, Lord Ennerdale poured forth his acknowledgments in the most impassioned terms, and supplicated her pardon for the distrust he had so ungratefully presumed to manifest: and Adela, still seeking by the gentlest expressions to sooth his disturbance, ventured to ask for some particulars of what had passed with her father.

The Earl, with as much calmness as he could command, then informed her, that immediately on quitting her the preceding day, he had hastened home to compose such a letter to Mr. Cleveland as he deemed

might insure a reception the least unfavourable, and call forth an answer most consonant to his fervent wishes. He waved communicating to his anxious auditress the entire purport of this letter—the liberality of his proposals with regard to settlements, and the perfectly disinterested indifference which it manifested relative to the fortune that Mr. Cleveland might think proper to bestow with his daughter's hand;—but, on the respect and earnestness with which he had written, he enlarged more amply; and Adela, as she listened to him, sighed, and wondered that to such intercessions her father could remain inexorable!

"This letter, my Adela," pursued he,—"on the fate of which so large a portion of my future happiness or wretchedness depended, I dispatched, with a throbbing heart, about an hour after I left you, ordering the servant, when he delivered it, to enquire whether Mr. Cleveland was at home, but, at all events, not to wait for any answer. He brought me word that your father dismounted at his own door, after his morning ride, just as my letter was put into the porter's hands.

"I was engaged," continued he, "to dine with Annesley and a party of men at the Thatched House: but so miserably anxious and unhinged was my mind, that the effort of going out, and of affecting undisturbed ease, surpassed my ability, and I sent to Portman Square a tardy and brief excuse.—I should but ill succeed, were I to attempt describing to you my feelings throughout the lingering remains of this intolerable day. Alone—unemployed—restlessly wandering from place to place—in momentary expectation of some sort of answer from your father, I listened with intense earnestness to every sound in the porter's hall, and though discouraged by innumerable and successive failures, was ever ready to start forward with renewed attention, on every recurrence of the slightest noise!—Oh, Adela, never may you be thus condemned to drain to the very dregs the bitter cup of disappointment—of long-protracted suspense! Positive calamity is, no doubt, more stunning, more tremendous — but whether more tormenting to a spirit of any firmness, I should find it hard to believe.—To what resource, do you imagine, I at

length applied for some alleviation of inquietude?—My thoughts full of your image—my whole imagination employed in reverting to former scenes in which you had borne a part, I suddenly recollected the juvenile correspondence which, for some time after my departure from Dr. Hampden's, had subsisted between us. Your letters I had faithfully preserved, and to them I now turned, as a miser to his hoarded treasure, and found a relief unspeakable in their perusal. The innocent tone of affection with which they were written—their mixture of archness and simplicity—the goodness of heart which every sentence indicated, touched me to the soul.—No other species of occupation could have fixed my wandering ideas; this caught and enchained every faculty. What would I not have given, dearest Adela, for one letter from you at the present period breathing a similar spirit of frank attachment!—But in the midst of the consolatory pursuit in which I had engaged, a footman entered, bringing to me what I most dreaded—most wished—the supposed answer of Mr. Cleveland!—I hardly dared trust my unsteady voice to bid

him put it down—the shaking hand I must have held out to receive it from him, would have betrayed its importance, and my own uncontroulable emotion. He left the room—and then, with a sort of desperate resolution, I seized it, tore open the cover, and found that it came—from Sir Patrick Harley."

"Sir Patrick Harley!" repeated Adela—"And what could be its purport?"

"He wrote to apply for a direction to my coachmaker!—But judge, my Adela, how perversely this mortifying and unprofitable interruption, dissipated all the train of pleasurable sentiments your hoarded correspondence had called forth! I could not recover the disposition that had enabled me to enjoy them. The impatience and irritability which for a while had been suspended, recurred more powerfully than ever—and till midnight, even whilst those letters remained in view upon my table, I could do nothing but pace about the apartment, again watching for the entrance of some domestic—again listening to every real or fancied sound from below. No messenger from your father, however, arrived—and my tor-

turing uncertainty lasted through the night. —This morning brought with it the decisive and unmitigated verdict which I now entreat you, Adela, to peruse"—

He then gave into her hand, and she read with feelings impossible to describe, the following concise letter:—

"To the Earl of Ennerdale.

"My Lord,

"The proposals for my youngest "daughter with which your lordship has "thought proper to honour me, I am under "the painful necessity of absolutely de-"clining. I beg to express my acknow-"ledgements for the flattering distinction "with which you have regarded her: but, "at the same time, must be permitted to "add, that it was scarcely to be expected, "the hand which has been dyed in the "blood of the brother, could ever, with "my approbation, be united with that of "the sister.

"I have the honour to be, my Lord,
"Your Lordship's very
"obedient servant,
"Augustus Cleveland."

Shuddering at the stern implacability of this haughty scroll, Adela let it fall from her hand when she had concluded it, and silently, yet with an expression of involuntary aversion, turned away her head as if afraid to let her eyes rest upon it again. Lord Ennerdale, who read her deep consternation in her looks, now said—

"You have too much generosity to tell me that I have been the architect of my own misery; yet, true it is, your father has so contrived to word his refusal, that it appears wholly the result of resentment at the past. An unconcerned, uninformed reader of these austere lines would pronounce them justly merited, and deem me a rash and sanguinary duellist, adding insult to injury, by daring to demand from the man whose son I had challenged, and nearly slain, the hand of his daughter!—But I am *not* the fierce aggressor this letter seems to stamp me. My principles and temper are equally averse from outrage and bloodshed. Still, there are provocations which scarcely any man could be proof against, and such (in justice to myself let me say) such was that which I received

from your intemperate brother. After all, however, this much-resented duel is but *one* amongst the many reasons Mr. Cleveland might have assigned for his rejection and antipathy. He has viewed me with irreconcileable ill-will even from the period of my being the cotemporary of his son at Eton; that son's animosities he has ever made his own—has adopted all his prejudices, and sanctioned all his hostile feelings. —This I, doubtless, knew, when I first became a candidate for your favour: but building too presumptuously on the influence which my situation in life, independent of all personal regard, might obtain for me, I became voluntarily blind to the danger of incurring the repulse I now so ineffectually deplore."

"The same pernicious miscalculation has deluded us both," cried Adela: "but to talk longer of the past is equally grievous and unavailing; the future must now be our sole object of concern. It is most painful to me," she added, "to remind you, that my father has decreed I should no longer reside in this house, unless your visits are suspended. Far be it from me,

selfishly to wish that you should deprive my sister and Mr. Somerville of the gratification they receive from your society. I have no desire, on the contrary, so earnest as that of insuring to them the continuance of this indulgence by my own immediate removal. Where, indeed, can I now be happier than at the good Dr. Hampden's? Where half so well, since there alone you are as intimately known and as affectionately valued as here?—I am anxious also to leave London before the return to it of my brother. The idea of seeing him immediately after the termination of this inauspicious affair, pains me more than I can express."—

"Yet, quit not your sweet sister, my Adela, one hour sooner than you originally proposed—quit her not, at least, during the few weeks she will still remain in town. I will banish myself from this loved roof most scrupulously;—nay, for the gratification of knowing, that you were not parted throughout the summer, I would exile myself from Northumberland the whole year: but Annesley and Lady Isabella, with some other friends, have volunteered to become

my guests at Mordington Castle, and I fear that it may be difficult to shake off the engagement. With hopes how different did I look forward to this annual migration!—You were, I believe, to be my nearest neighbour;—nay, more; I had already established you, in fancy, as my inmate—the mistress of my dwelling—the permanent companion of my happy life!—I already beheld you, *in my mind's eye*, wandering amidst the scenes your presence would so greatly have contributed to embellish and endear; I thought of our proximity to your sister and Mr. Somerville—to the abode now inhabited by my boy."

"Oh, do not, do not," interrupted the distressed Adela, "recapitulate, with this ingenious cruelty, the many circumstances that would have conspired to my felicity, had such a journey been permitted me!—I must not dwell now upon visionary schemes of happiness, but seek to rest content with the mere exemption from superadded sorrow."—

"Grateful and consolatory to my heart as is the regret you thus feelingly express, let me be disinterested enough to present to

You some motives on which to found a hope of better times—some reflections capable of softening the grief of this bitter parting. Nothing on this side the grave, let us trust, can be immutable: the opposition of your father may, therefore, from a thousand causes terminate, and our sentence of separation may be repealed. I will anxiously guard against every possibility of further irritating his resentment;—I will endeavour to cultivate the favour of the General; and..."

"Of the General?" interrupted Adela, changing colour—"Then you mean to become an assiduous visitor at his house?"—

The Earl could not misunderstand the agitation with which this question was hastily and involuntarily asked.—He took her hand, and pressed it, enchanted, to his lips:

"My best and *only* love!" exclaimed he,—"the visits, whether to that or to any other mansion on the globe, which I might make, could effect no change in this devoted heart!—It is your's unalterably, and to the attainment of the sole prize it values—the hand I now hold—will all its wishes, all its energies, henceforward be applied!"

As he spoke, his eye accidentally rested upon the ring she wore—his own unavowed offering—and, at the same moment, the observation of Adela was drawn to the same object—

"This ring," said she, with some hesitation, and regarding him with a conscious smile, "my heart has ever told me, is *your* gift. Should you not thank me for the value which I have therefore attached to it?"

"Oh, value it still, sweet Adela, and wear it with even a superstitious constancy! Let it be a silent memorial to you of my unfailing love,—and never, never may your eye rest upon it, without bestowing a gentle and a kind regret upon your absent Algernon!"

A loud knocking at the street door, announcing visitors, now rendered Adela urgent with him to depart. He reluctantly compelled himself to obey her, and snatching her for a moment to his heart, fervently exclaimed—

"Adela—dear Adela, farewel! I have no words to tell you what this separation costs me! Remember, that on your faith—on your firm and unwavering affection, my sole chance of earthly happiness depends.

For the softness you have shewn me during this melancholy parting, take my blessing and my thanks! Once more, farewel—be steady, be unchangeable, and whenever we may meet again, let me gratefully find, that absence has had no power to displace me, either from your memory or your heart!"

He then hastily left her.

Too much disordered to endure the thought of being seen, Adela instantly ran up to her room, and found no relief for her full heart but from the indulgence of a copious flood of tears. Whatever were the hopes to which Lord Ennerdale encouraged her to look forward, she mournfully foreboded, that all now was at an end between them. Whence, indeed, could the remotest expectation be derived of a favourable reverse in their affairs? Was it to be imagined her father would revoke his decree? Or that Julius, to gratify whose enmity it had been passed, would himself become their friend? And who else possessed over Mr. Cleveland the slightest influence? To neither of her sisters would he listen, she was assured;—to Mr. Somerville, perhaps, still less. The General, even if he had had

any weight with his brother, she well knew was too indolent in matters not relating to his own gratification, to exert it with the zealous perseverance her case demanded. Unaided, therefore, by any mediator in whose success she could confide; afflicted, and desponding, Adela half regretted the mutual explanation between herself and the Earl which had passed; and looked back to the time when, (though uncertain of his attachment) she daily beheld him, with earnest wishes that it had not flown so quickly. Whatever had been the apparent insensibility her looks and manners had testified during the whole period of her suspense, certain it is, that she had, in reality, loved him almost from the moment she had quitted the General's roof. So seldom had his assiduities been remitted since that time, that gratitude had confirmed what admiration had begun, and the happiness of seeing and conversing with him, seemed now the first requisite of her existence.

Mrs. Somerville, missing her from the drawing-room during nearly the whole morning, at length went up to enquire after her. An unreserved explanation was then

given to her of all that had passed. Adela struggled no more to conceal the true state of her feelings: she looked, and candidly acknowledged herself, thoroughly unhappy. Yet no reflections against her father escaped her; she even forbore accusing her brother. The object she alone blamed was herself, for not having better known, in a predicament of so much uncertainty, how to guard the avenues of her heart. But every thing, she observed, had of late conspired to render her nearly forgetful of the opposition which awaited her attachment. Even Jemima, by the terror she had shewn of her presumed influence over Lord Ennerdale, had seemed to imply, that she thought the obstacles to his success not wholly invincible; and the partiality indicated for her by the Annesleys; the abated austerity of the Dowager the last time they had met, added to the sanguine, though ill-founded confidence invariably cherished by Mr. and Mrs. Somerville, had contributed to lull her prudence, and silence all her fears. She professed, however, the most unlimited disposition to perfect obedience; and said, that Lord Ennerdale himself shewed a resolution to submit

to present circumstances, which, had she required it, would alone have been a lesson sufficient for her own conduct.—He had, she told her sister, solicited and obtained her promise of refusing all engagement for a twelvemonth. With respect to the correspondence in which he wished her to become a party, she was silent. The pleadings of Mrs. Somerville, joined to those of her own heart, she feared would be more than she should have fortitude to withstand: and Adela, anticipating (if it was interdicted,) the sorrow it would cost her to break it off—or the self-reproach that would attend her still carrying it on, felt sincerely reluctant to give any hope of engaging in it at all.

Towards the conclusion of this conference, tranquillizing to her spirits, from the sympathy and affection manifested for her by Mrs. Somerville, she earnestly exhorted that lady to fix an early day for the dinner at their father's; and dictated to her the most submissive message to be delivered to him from herself:—

"Tell him, my dear sister," she said, "that I humbly and implicitly acquiesce in his decision; and assure him, that Lord

Ennerdale and I have taken leave with no view of seeing each other again. Yet, if he confirms the wish, expressed in his letter, of hastening my departure from town, say, that I am ready to set out, without hesitation or delay, the instant his pleasure is made known to me.—Execute this commission with the most scrupulous exactness. My prompt obedience, dear Elinor, may avail me more than your most elaborate intercessions. I have no design in acting thus: but if I had, is not the chance greater of softening my father's rigour by docility and compliance, than by murmurs or opposition?"

The mortified chagrin of Mr. Somerville at the total failure of his long-cherished hope of beholding the union of Adela and Lord Ennerdale, was not only manifest, but even attended with unusual asperity. He menaced his wife, who vainly sought to pacify him, with making it the motive for an entire breach with Julius; and protested that nothing on earth should induce him to become the guest of her father even for a single hour!

Adela, hurt by his vehemence, and, on every account solicitous to bring him to milder feelings, sought, though with great effort to herself, and at the risk of drawing

down all his indignation upon her own head, to treat what had passed with an appearance of indifference wholly foreign to her real sentiments. She begged him not to seize upon *that* as a pretext to quarrel, which she, the principal person concerned, hoped to be able to bear with so much greater resignation; and warmly urged him to afflict neither her sister nor herself, by threats against the two individuals of their family whom it least befitted them passively to hear spoken of with intemperance.

His displeasure now, as she had justly anticipated, was levelled against her almost exclusively. He told her, she had never shewn the slightest feeling; taxed her with want of common gratitude; said she was undeserving the generous affection she had excited—and forgetting, in his rage at her imputed insensibility, his pre-conceived animosity to her father, suffered his wife to write, and appoint whatever day she chose for the expected visit.

This point settled, he flung out of the room; dined from home without giving any previous notice of his intention; and, on his next interview with Adela, scarcely deigned either to speak to, or look at her.

CHAP. III.

MUTATION.

On the evening of the day which all but Adela spent at her father's, sad at heart, and unusually averse from seeking relief in employment, she was listening with a languid smile to the gay rattle of Christina Cleveland, who had been permitted to dine with her, when the drawing-room door suddenly opened, and she beheld Julius.

Her courage, at this sight, wholly deserted her. Exultation at her disappointment, and derision at her obvious dejection, were the sole expectations she entertained from his visit. His return to town she was not till that moment apprised of: and gladly, to avoid such an interview, would she herself have flown to the remotest corner of the kingdom.

But though inferior to her satisfaction, great was her surprise at the air and manner with which he first addressed her. He

kissed her with unwonted affection; avoided scrutinizing her countenance, and spoke in kinder accents, and used more gentle and endearing language than she had before ever experienced from him. For some time, her amazement held her silent, and she could only, at stolen intervals, regard him apprehensively, as if to ascertain whether all this was not the effect of mockery, and whether there lurked not beneath such a semblance of forbearance, a disposition to unfeeling ridicule. But nothing of such a nature could she trace; and, at length, recovering the faculty of speech, she ventured to ask him how long he had been arrived in town?

"I came this morning," answered he: "but, my dear Adela, make me some tea. You have drank your own, probably, long ago, but I have not,—and I mean to sit with you for the rest of the evening, unless you have any thing particular to do."

"Oh, nothing," answered she, more and more astonished—"I shall be extremely glad of your company. Yet, will they not, in Hertford Street, be a little hurt at your deserting them?"

"They will not even miss me. There is

other company besides the Somervilles and Alicia; and, I think, I heard a threat of music from Barbara:—you know my old aversion to her sort of harmony?"

Adela then rang the bell, and whilst her orders for tea were executing, Julius turned to his merry-hearted young cousin, and made a laughing apology for having spoken with so little ceremony of Barbara's talents:—

"But the truth is, my dear Christy," added he, "you were so unusually quiet, and are so easily eclipsed by a screen or a high-backed chair, that I did not at that moment perceive you, and forgot that you were in the room."

Christina accepted this excuse, awkward as it was, with her accustomed good humour; and Adela, exerting herself to appear less depressed, asked him to give her some account of his recent excursion.

He smiled, and, she fancied, even coloured, as he answered—"Oh, I can tell you nothing about it that would at all amuse you!"

However, he stated, in general terms, that the country was beginning to be in

great beauty; that he had never enjoyed fine weather and fine scenery so much; that he had made several new and delightful additions to his acquaintance, and upon the whole, had been, for the space of a fortnight, the happiest fellow in existence!

"And where was all this felicity experienced?"

"Why—at a place you never heard the name of in your life."

"And is that a reason why I never should?"

"I assure you that you would be none the wiser if I told it you;—it is a single house, out of the direction of any public road, and in a county which you know nothing at all about."

Adela was too cautious of provoking him to persist in her enquiries, and finding her willing to let the subject drop, he desired to hear what her plans were to be for the rest of the summer?

"As soon," answered she, "as Elinor and Mr. Somerville leave town—perhaps before—I shall return into Devonshire."

"And whose arrangement is this?"

"My father's."

Julius said nothing, but he looked by no means pleased; and it was some time before he could prevail upon himself to resume the conversation upon general subjects. Adela, as little desirous to pursue the discourse as he was, gladly consented (after two or three unsuccessful attempts to talk with serenity of indifferent things) to sit down to the instrument and play to him some of his favourite marches and French country-dances.

During her performance, Christina was sent for, and took her leave. Julius then, seated himself close beside his sister, but somewhat in the shade, and bidding her cease all that "noisy clatter," asked her, for the first time in his life, to sing him a slow and soothing song.

She enquired whether it should be in English, Scotch, or Italian?

"Oh, English;—let it be Mozart's, *Forget me not*."

"Why, my dear Julius, I had no suspicion you knew that such a composer as Mozart had ever existed? Where did you pick up this information about him, and

what has made you so suddenly grow fond of singing?"

"I always," replied he, with some hesitation, "was fond of it, when it had any soul and feeling! Barbara's distracting flourishes, indeed, never were much to my taste. Her singing is all affectation, and ill-executed scamper and rapidity; and with regard to her playing, whatever she undertakes, sounds to me like a series of mistakes! I know that it is all very fine, and, that however confused the composition seems, to ears untaught, she will eventually find her way out of the maze: but, meanwhile, she sets my teeth on edge, and leaves me no wish but to make as speedy an escape as possible."

Adela, happy that her unpretending efforts could so much better amuse him, and glad to be spared the necessity of talking, sought for the air he had desired her to sing, and performed it with such genuine sensibility of expression, that it was evident her heart entered into the task, and associated to the words which she was repeating, remembrances the most applicable to her present circumstances, and the most affecting

to her present feelings. Julius seemed aware, when it was too late, that he had exacted from her a trying effort. He thanked her with great cordiality when she paused, and as if to afford some relief to her spirits, was proceeding to ask for a more enlivening strain, when the carriage drove up to the door which brought home her sisters and Mr. Somerville.

After their return, Julius speedily took leave, and Adela remained impressed with a more favourable opinion of his delicacy and feeling than she had ever before been encouraged to entertain. Not once had he, in the most distant degree, alluded to her division from Lord Ennerdale,—not once had he even insinuated that he knew what had occurred: but sociable and friendly, she had again found him the same amiable and affectionate companion he once before had shewn himself during her temporary residence in Hertford Street.

"Oh, that this amicable spirit may last!" she internally exclaimed; from whatever cause it proceeds, how gratefully shall I hail and cherish it!"

Mrs. Erington now gave her an account

of the day they had spent, not much calculated, (had it been passed any where but at her father's) to make Adela regret her own exclusion.

"We had to meet us," said Alicia, "our gallant, but hollow uncle, his proud consort, and two of their hopeful progeny. Besides these, we were honoured with the presence of a noble senator of the realm, and of a battered old admiral, who differed in politics, and snarled at each other during the whole dinner; of two scientific professors, unwilling to be intelligible, and therefore, self condemned to be mute; of a popular but pert poet, whose snip-snap manners have destroyed in me all the enthusiasm his works had excited; and lastly, of a pair of venerable spinsters, Mrs. Lucretia and Mrs. Arethusa Macphyllida, great-aunts of every nephew and niece our ample family can boast."

"And whom," said Adela, "amidst this assemblage, did you select to talk with?"

"Why, my neighbour, the chaste Lucretia; and she gave me some very valuable hints for compounding anti-spasmodic medicines,—for relieving the anguish of gnat-

bites, and wasp-stings,—for polishing mahogany tables,—and improving quince marmalade!"

"And what did her sister talk about?"

"Really, I can't very well tell; she addressed herself chiefly to Mr. Somerville, and, I believe, upon the subject of pastoral poetry: I overheard something about eclogues and idyls, that instantly made me turn my head another way."

"And why?"

"Oh, because shepherds and their bleating flocks, *et les ruisseaux, avec leurs cousins les ormeaux, et leurs frères les moineaux, et leurs bisaïeuls les sentimens*, always put me into a passion—or make me fall asleep!"

"I am afraid," said Mrs. Somerville, "that you may apply to yourself a quotation from another witty foreigner, and frankly acknowledge, that you have no taste *pour les plaisirs innocents!*"

"Why, certainly not much, if they are all to be derived from descriptions of sportive lambkins, and murmuring brooks, and sighing swains! The simplicity of these rural images will never suit my vitiated fancy, till the harmless picture is enlivened

by the intrusion into it of a few wolves and foxes!"

She then, with a yawn expressive of the weariness so tame a subject gave her, bade them all good night, and retired to her room.

The day that had been appointed for the christening of Mr. and Mrs. Somerville's infant son was now approaching. On its eve, Lord Ennerdale wrote to say, that as it unfortunately appeared incumbent upon him to resign the pleasure of standing for his young godson in person, he requested Mr. Somerville to become his proxy. He then expatiated (but in strict confidence to Mrs. Somerville, to whom the letter was addressed) upon the subject of his late grievous rejection:—"Wretched as it has made me," said he, "and cheering as it would be, I am "well assured, to your generous sister, to "know that I possessed any secret motive "of consolation, yet, for the universe, would "I not have her suspect the source whence "such consolation is derived!—it originates "not in the senseless idea that Mr. Cleve-"land's purposes are to be changed:—I am "far from being so abandoned as to found

"it upon a wish or hope of his premature "dissolution.—No—I rest my expectations "solely upon Adela herself. She has given "me a promise, which I trust she regards "as sacred, to preserve her freedom inviolate for the ensuing year. Yet her mind "is at this moment under the influence, "partly of terror, partly of an overstrained "sense of filial obligation.—May not time "weaken her terrors, and take from her "filial scruples somewhat of their force? "She loves me, dearest Mrs. Somerville!— "Can she then endure to consign me to "lasting sorrow? It would startle, and "perhaps deeply offend her, were I now to "express a belief, that the unqualified rigour of her purposed obedience can ever "relax. But, if with apparent resignation, "I submit, during a twelvemonth, to the "sentence that has been passed against us; "—if I keep alive in her heart the affection "which she has avowed for me, by engaging her in a frequent correspondence, is "there not reason to hope that she may, at "the end of that interval, or, at least, when "she comes of age, find her stability a little "shaken? And would not you, my indul-

"gent friend, be the first to favour my cause, "and to assist in convincing her, that having attained the period prescribed by the "laws for becoming entitled to dispose of "her own hand, she ought no longer to "condemn me to a life of lingering disappointment?—Were Mr. Cleveland ever "to step forward as a just and impartial parent—were he to take her to his heart, and "receive her beneath his roof, then would "my prospects indeed be dreary!—The love "which Adela entertains for me, might "not be proof against such measures—her "renunciation of me would probably be irrevocable, and her father's triumph complete.—Whilst affairs, however, remain "upon their present footing, there seems "reason to indulge more flattering anticipations: and these alone now support "my courage, and moderate my repinings.

"I intercede, dear Mrs. Somerville, most "earnestly, for your aid in inducing Adela "to consent to the epistolary intercourse I "proposed to her. All my expectations "rest upon that foundation."

Mrs. Somerville, desirous of furnishing her husband with what he might deem a

reasonable excuse for giving up the resentment against Adela of which he was himself becoming weary, shewed him, under an injunction of inviolable secrecy, the Earl's letter. It produced the desired effect. If Lord Ennerdale was content with the degree of attachment that had been manifested for him, his friends, assuredly, had no right to be more fastidious;—if, also, he was content to practise present submission to the restrictions that were enjoined him, his friends were not entitled to be more refractory. All things considered then, Mr. Somerville resolved to seek a reconciliation with his fair sister, and still to cherish her as fondly as ever, even upon her own terms.

Adela was not difficult to appease. She gladly extended to him a friendly hand, and the most perfect concord once more established itself between them.

On questioning Mrs. Somerville, with great anxiety, to know what answer her father had returned to her message, she was told by that lady, that having found no opportunity of delivering it to him herself, she had ventured to entrust it to a proxy, who

had professed the truest zeal in service, and promised to repeat it most faithfully and circumstantially:

"Whom can you possibly mean?"

"One whom I saw nearly as much interested in your affairs as myself; one who enquired after you with looks and words of unaffected solicitude—Julius, in short!—Have I done very wrong?"

"I should have thought, dear Elinor, that you had at least done very idly," replied Adela, "had I heard this account previous to my last interview with him: but his conduct on that occasion was so every way calculated to give me confidence in his regard, that I am far more glad than sorry you chose such a delegate."

CHAP. IV.

ESCAPE.

Uninformed of the day when his nephew's baptism was to take place, Julius, in the midst of the ceremony, entered the Somer-

villes' drawing-room. The party assembled was large, and, in addition to a number of persons who were almost strangers to him, consisted of Mr. Annesley, who was one of the godfathers, Lady Isabella, Mrs. Ross, Sir Patrick Harley, and the clergyman, who was reading the service. He stopped a moment irresolute at the door: but catching the eye of Adela, who half smiled as she looked up at him, he quietly advanced, and posted himself next to her.

When the minister closed the book, and the infant Algernon was to be conveyed back to his nurse, placid and tranquil as he had hitherto remained, his patience at last gave way, and he burst into a loud and vehement fit of crying. Adela flew to release from so uneasy a charge his disconcerted godmother, the scared and provoked Alicia, and hastened with him towards the door.

As she proceeded, soothing and endeavouring to pacify such clamorous discontent, she fondly bent over him, exclaiming softly, "Hush, darling boy! Hush, my own little Algernon!"

"Ah, how much more grateful an *own Algernon* you might possess!" whispered, though not very inaudibly, a voice just behind her.

She hastily turned her head, and at the same moment that she discovered in Mr. Annesley the author of this speech, she met the eyes of her brother, who stood close beside him, and by whom, she could have no doubt, it had been distinctly overheard. Frightened at such a possibility, she hurried on, almost tempted, after surrendering to his attendant the weary baby, to avoid appearing again. But unwilling to occasion enquiries and messages, she conquered her reluctance, and shortly re-entered the room.

Julius was now engaged at cards, and she cautiously held aloof from the table at which he sat; but Lady Isabella, who was his partner, addressing to her some question, she was obliged to approach nearer;—and then, to her unspeakable surprise, far from finding herself contemplated by him with unfeeling superciliousness, she saw in his aspect an expression of strong-marked concern and pity!

Affected by so kind a change, her eyes filled with tears, and scarcely could she forbear going round to thank him.

Mr. Annesley, though he spoke to her no more in so significant a manner, hovered near her, and conversed with hardly any body else the whole evening. She listened to him with pleasure, but not in compliment to his powers of entertainment: on the contrary, his animation was, at the present moment, almost too much for her. But with his sight, the recollection of Lord Ennerdale was so strongly united, that, independent of any thing he uttered, the very sound of his voice was grateful to her. Indeed, she often scarcely knew what he said, or was capable of giving to him either an apt or collected answer. Yet he still persevered in addressing her; and it sometimes seemed as if, actuated by the same spirit, he found as much satisfaction in talking to her for the sake of his friend, as she had in listening to him.

Sir Patrick Harley, who, for several weeks, had seen of her infinitely less than previous to Mr. Somerville's confinement,

was charmed to regain his former privilege of bestowing upon her the deliberate homage of his 'lack-lustre eyes.' She appeared to him, viewed again in the circle of her family, with almost every charm of entire novelty; and so beautiful did he think her, so superior to every woman he had beheld during her retreat, that her presence gave even to *his* ponderous heart, an elastic spring it had rarely experienced, and rendered him as utterly regardless of every other female in the room, as if secure of Adela's most tender partiality.

Nothing could be less in consonance than such a circumstance with the wishes of the speculating, but shallow Alicia. The unwearied pains she had taken to attract towards herself the favour of Sir Patrick, merited in her estimation, a more grateful and courteous return. She had yet to learn, that though flattery from an indifferent person, in the absence of a dearer object, may enforce complacency, and bribe attention, it stands no chance of maintaining its ground when vanity becomes a secondary passion, and the feelings of the heart are again called

into action by the presence of its selected favourite. Sir Patrick was too assailable on the score of conceit to distrust the sincerity of Mrs. Erington's demonstrations of regard: and being a fervent admirer of beauty, her civilities were far from being unacceptable to him. She appeared in his own eyes, and was acknowledged by many contemporary judges of female loveliness, to be even more dazzlingly handsome than her junior sister. Yet Adela, whether from the circumstance of exhibiting herself less frequently, or from possessing superior powers to retain those whom she had once captivated, was universally pronounced the most attractive, and never failed in society to secure the largest majority of favourers. Sir Patrick was very prone to be swayed by the judgment of the multitude, and when the two sisters were together, was always more devotedly the slave of Adela than of the less undesigning Alicia. When they were apart, and he beheld Mrs. Erington in high fashion with the *tonish* men of the day, she acquired a degree of consequence in his estimation that rendered

her the almost unrivalled object of his assiduity.

"Why do these dim orbs," said Mr. Annesley, directing a quick but smiling glance towards the Baronet, and then addressing Adela, "so long delay borrowing aid from speech to interpret their master's passion?—To that expedient they 'must come at last,' for what can you do with his dumb adoration? However well inclined you may be to reward it, custom, tyrannic custom forbids your dispensing with the little hackneyed ceremony of a specific declaration: to *thoughts that breathe*, he must add *words that burn*, before you can, with any propriety, assure him of your pity."

"There are few things, I am persuaded," said Adela, "which he would disdain more heartily than an assurance of pity from one, whom, (whilst he fancies himself holding in suspense) he doubtless regards as an object of such infinite compassion. Besides, he is so well guarded by ostentation from the approaches of real sensibility—he is so inaccessible to the attacks of genuine sorrow, by the constitutional apathy of his

mind, that I much question whether joy or grief, are not equally remote from any of the feelings he ever *has*, or ever *will* experience."

"With the impassibility you attribute to him, he would be an admirable subject for a naturalist to try a little experimental philosophy upon. It would be curious to ascertain, after the operation of trepanning, with how much of his brain remaining, he might be sent into the world, to cut as good a figure as he does at this moment."

"I am inclined to suspect," said Adela, half laughing, "that no deductions made by such a process, would effect any perceptible change!"

Before the party dispersed, Julius drew Adela to a remote window, and said, "How much longer do the Somervilles purpose to remain in town?"

"About ten days or a fortnight."

"I have the pleasure then to tell you, that no sort of opposition will be made to your continuing with them till the last moment of their stay."

"Thank you, dear Julius, for this agreeable intelligence; and thank you for having

so kindly undertaken to be my spokesman with my father. How did he listen to my humble message?"

"Oh, patiently enough! And I do not see very well how he could do otherwise. He may rest assured that he has no other child who would have sent him its counterpart!—But, Adela—I have heard a detestable report of Lady Rosalvan's having contracted some mean and disgraceful marriage! Do you know any thing of it? Is the hateful history true?"

Adela sighed deeply, and reluctantly acknowledged that it was.

"And how did you first obtain the information? Who is the wretch she has chosen? Tell me all you know upon the subject; I hope you have never heard it alluded to except within these walls!"

"Ah, my dear Julius, you must dismiss that hope!"

She then, seeing him all impatience for a fuller explanation, communicated to him without reserve, the dialogue, which she had overheard at Lady Wilbrook's concert, and the every way mortifying reflections which the persevering imprudence of her

mother, encouraged the illiberal to cast upon her own birth.

"I have never," continued she, "ventured into any large party since the night of the concert; nor, to say the truth, shall I feel either disposition or courage, speedily, to expose myself again to the chance of hearing such assertions.—Oh, Julius, how must my father's total disregard of me, that cruel evening, have assisted in confirming these injurious doubts!"

Julius, enraged by this account of the calumnies in circulation respecting her, made the most minute enquiries into every particular of the conversation which had so much shocked her—murmured a thousand imprecations between his teeth; and when he had gathered from her the utmost her memory would furnish, only saying—

"It is fit my father should hear of this!" he abruptly quitted her, and left the house.

The following morning, Adela reflecting that her stay in London would now be very short, and anxious before she went, to obtain an interview with Mr. and Mrs.

Hampden, wrote to the latter, entreating her to appoint a time for the meeting. The succeeding evening was named; and borrowing her sister's carriage (for she no longer dared venture to the house unattended) she was punctual to the hour of assignation.

William, reading at a window, was alone in the room into which she had been conducted. The sickly hue of his complexion remained unaltered; but he looked more cheerful, and received her with ease and evident pleasure.

Her first enquiries being over, Adela informed him, that she expected shortly to re-visit Devonshire, and intreated that he would give her authority to employ her talents of mediation between him and his parents.

"Tell me but why, my dear William," added she, "you have so cruelly abstained from giving them any intelligence of yourself? Tell me only, how soon I may announce to them a probability of seeing you, and it will be the joy of my heart to prepare them for your arrival, and to smooth all the difficulties of your first meeting."

"It was for the purpose," replied he, "of leaving us to the free discussion of this affair, that my considerate Annabel retired on your approach. Lord Ennerdale tells me, that you are most generously anxious on a subject which the goodness of your own heart alone can render interesting to you; and I will confess, that he exhorted me to hear you with no predetermination to remain uninfluenced by your advice. The assiduous zeal, and noble conduct towards us of that incomparable friend, with the prospect, however distant, of recovering health sufficient to resume my military duties, have softened the pride of my heart—re-animated my spirits, and made me willing, at length, to let my family become acquainted with the situation in which I stand. My return to England is no secret to them; but they are equally ignorant of my marriage, and of my illness. Tell them, dear Miss Cleveland, that when consenting to receive a returning prodigal, they must open their hearts also to admit and cherish his loved partner;—paint to them her angelic conduct throughout the hard period of my

sufferings; tell them, her disinterested affection can never, by those who love me, be sufficiently repaid: say, that though now condemned to penury and sorrow, she was born in affluence, and till she knew me, never experienced an hour's affliction! Yet, how heroically has she borne it! How superior to all calamity has her attachment made her!"

"All this," said Adela, touched by his grateful affection, "I will, with delight, recapitulate. But forgive me, William, if I venture to ask, whether your sweet wife has made no effort to soften the resentment of her own father."

"She has written twice to her sister-in-law," answered he; "there has been no time yet for the arrival of an answer to the *second* of these letters: but the *first* has been replied to with vague and unmeaning expressions of kindness, which gave us very little hope of a favourable issue to the negociation."

"Why does she not hazard a direct address to her father himself?"

"It is long," answered William, "since her father has thought himself in a capa-

city to read or write any letters whatever. He is a confirmed valetudinarian, or rather hypochondriac, subject to dreadful fits of depression, and apt, continually, to entertain the gloomiest fears of impending dissolution. He gives up to his son's widow the entire management of his house, and the regulation of every affair connected either with his estate or family."

"Is this widow sincerely friendly to your wife?"

"We have no means of ascertaining. Annabel is unsuspicious, and prone to believe all the world, like herself, disinterested and guileless. I have no personal acquaintance with Mrs. Forester; but a variety of minute and almost indescribable indications, lead me to conjecture, that she is capable of much selfishness and duplicity."

"Hopeless, indeed, in that case is your wife's application. But has this unfortunate parent of hers, no friend, or tried and confidential domestic near him, through whose interference an appeal might be immediately made to himself?"

"His oldest friend, my dear Miss Cleveland, you will be surprised to hear, is your

father. Sir Thomas Forester, though now such a recluse, and fancying himself in so precarious and desperate a state, is not many years the senior of Mr. Cleveland, and was his cotemporray both at school, and at the university. Some time ago, they still corresponded; whether the increasing debility of Sir Thomas has wholly occasioned the discontinuance of that practice, I cannot say: but to your father, I have often heard my wife assert, the poor dejected Baronet is more warmly attached than to any other individual still holding an intercourse with the world."

"Alas! William," exclaimed the mortified Adela, "how grievous is it, that with all my earnest solicitude to serve you, I should yet be powerless (where my father is concerned) to make myself of the smallest use to you. I have none of the usual privileges of a child, who has never wilfully offended! I do not live under the paternal roof; I never converse with my father, and only once since I came to London, have I even by accident found myself in the same room with him!—William—you think your own a situation of peculiar ad-

versity; and such assuredly it *is*, as far as relates to the injury of your health: but there are afflictions, purely mental, which it requires nearly as much fortitude to bear up against, as any which have assailed you."

"I never was one of those," cried young Hampden, "who could derive any consolation from knowing how many others there are in the world as miserable as myself! You have therefore held out to me, my dear Adela, the most unavailing of all possible motives of resignation. To have heard that you were as happy as you deserve, would very sincerely have rejoiced me—to find that you are the contrary, can only add to my discontent."

Adela, thanking him for these friendly sentiments, then enquired, how soon he purposed, as had been agreed, to remove from his present lodgings to the house of Lord Ennerdale.

"I never seriously," answered he, "entertained such a design. The splendid town-residence of a nobleman at this gay season of the year, can be no suitable abode, in our present circumstances, either

for Annabel or myself. I hope, without giving Lord Ennerdale offence, to induce him to desist from the proposal; since, however benevolently meant, it is irksome to us both to think of."

"He is too sincerely your friend," cried Adela, "to press upon you any scheme which he sees you reluctant to comply with. Yet, I am persuaded he will be greatly disappointed at your failure, and I must still hope, that you may at last be induced to alter your determination. The change of scene and of society, would do you good."

The appearance of Mrs. Hampden, who now gently opened the door, and asked, with some hesitation, whether she might come in, put an end to the conference between her husband and Adela, and introduced more lively and general conversation.

The rest of the evening, a pleasanter one than, in her present frame of mind, Adela had any hope of passing, fled rapidly. Mrs. Hampden, with a simplicity and artlessness of character, perfectly unaffected, and extremely engaging, was gay and

original. Her education had by no means been neglected; she had quick parts—a playful imagination, and a natural softness of manners, and wish of obliging, that rendered her, in every respect, a companion the most delightful. In beholding the unobtrusive, but boundless affection she cherished for her husband, Adela learnt to make allowance for the rashness, which had appeared to her almost inexcusable, of their clandestine union; and felt glad to encourage in herself a disposition to consider the fondness that had caused it, as a palliation of its imprudence.

At eleven o'clock, when Mrs. Somerville's carriage called for her, she took a reluctant leave, and found no difficulty in promising to spend with them another evening before she quitted town.

In the passage leading to the street door, which, fortunately for her, was open, and at which stood one of Mr. Somerville's footmen, she found stationed, as if on purpose to see her pass, the presuming, and, as she had reason to believe, vindictive Norris. He bowed as she glided swiftly by, and would have spoken, but she was

in the carriage ere he could articulate a single sentence; and avoiding to look at him, she desired, in a voice of haste and trepidation, to be driven home with all possible speed. The order was obeyed, and she saw no more of her arrogant tormentor.

Mrs. Somerville, on hearing Adela's account of her visit, and of the obvious amendment of young Hampden, said she would call upon his wife the next morning, and asked her husband's permission to invite them, in both their names, to dinner. This was not a request the hospitable Somerville was likely to oppose, and Adela, when her sister returned from Dorset Street, had the pleasure of hearing, that the Hampdens had consented to spend with them the following day.

CHAP. V.

RELENTING.

DURING the time this little negociation was transacting, Julius, the adventurous Julius, was, on his part, engaged in an enterprise, which it required all his intrepidity, and all his known influence, to give him spirits even to deliberate upon.

Three days subsequent to his last interview with Adela, abruptly entering the room in which she was sitting with her two sisters, he approached her with a look of triumphant joy that irradiated his whole countenance, and seizing her hands, exclaimed, almost breathless—

" My good and dear Adela—my long-banished sister, I am sent to tell you, that henceforth, my father's house is to be your home!"

A cry of mingled gratitude, astonishment, and transport, burst from her heart, and throwing herself, bathed in tears, into her brother's arms, she had only voice to say—

"Oh, Julius—dear, dear Julius! This, I can have no doubt, is your generous deed!"

"No matter," cried he, "whose deed it is! The fact is most certain, and from the bottom of my heart, I give you and myself joy!"

Mrs. Somerville and Alicia now approached, to join their felicitations to his: and Adela, fluttered, trembling, yet in an ecstasy of delight, embraced them both with the warmest affection. Then, returning to her brother, and resting her hand upon his shoulder—

"My kind and beloved Julius," said she, in a tone of entreaty, "will you give me the exquisite satisfaction of hearing how all this was brought about?"

"Well—sit down, and I will tell you as much of the matter as I can recollect. The infamous aspersions thrown upon your birth at that memorable concert you attended, sent me home, after hearing you detail them, in a paroxysm of rage that kept me waking nearly the whole night. Fully determined not to spare my father the amplest relation of these respectable rumours, I

waited for nothing with so much impatience as an opportunity of executing my purpose. We breakfasted *tête-à-tête*, the next morning, and I availed myself, (too much agitated for embarrassment or hesitation,) of a moment that seemed so favourable for the disclosure. I represented to him, in as forcible language as I could use, the unmerited disgrace such reports were casting upon you; I reminded him of what had fallen from his own lips after seeing you at Lady Wilbrooke's—that is, of his surprise on perceiving your strong likeness to the whole Cleveland family; I said, my heart assured me, that you were unquestionably the daughter of *both* my parents, my sister, in the truest and most positive sense of the word; and I urgently, and even vehemently supplicated him, to let you appear as such to the world, to open to you his house, and to afford you, from that moment, the protection of a father."

Adela, who was seated beside him, holding one of his hands, now pressed it with grateful affection to her heart; and Julius, smiling at this mute acknowledgment, thus concluded his narrative:—

"I could obtain no decided answer to my eager remonstrance that day: not to have incurred a formal prohibition of the subject, was, however, a great point gained, and I used the tacit privilege of reverting to it, on all and every promising occasion. Important objections to my proposition, my father could adduce none;—trivial ones I did away by the irresistible force of ceaseless importunity. The balance hung in suspense some time—but this morning, the scale containing his unsubstantial scruples kicked the beam; he pronounced and ratified his solemn consent, and I exultingly set off to acquaint you with my success."

"And such honour does so zealous an act of brotherly friendship do you," cried Mrs. Somerville, "that it might redeem half the errors of the longest life!"

"I perceive," said Julius, laughing, "that you think, a few such good deeds to set against the ample store of faults and follies which you would insinuate I stand charged with, might not be, altogether, mere works of supererogation!"

"I think," resumed she, kindly, "that with some human imperfections, not yet

sufficiently disciplined by time, you have the best heart that ever beat in"...

"In the bosom of a spoilt and only son!" interrupted he, "Hey, my dear Elinor, was not that what you meant? Well, well, it's all very true; I know as perfectly as you can tell me, that I am a rash, petulant, headstrong fellow; but I have no time, just now, to analyse the causes of these defects; to ascertain whether they all proceed from the scarcity of birch twigs in my nursery, or from the superabundance of wild oats, as they are called, in my unlucky composition. I have a little business upon my hands a few miles out of town, and must now be off; but you shall see me again soon, and then you may resume, and pursue at your leisure the chapter of my *human imperfections*."

"And so saying, he was hastening away; but Mrs. Somerville stopped him to enquire whether Adela would be expected to remove to Hertford Street before she and Mr. Somerville left town?

"By no means. All she has to do, is to hold herself in readiness, as soon as you de-

part, to accompany my father and me into Wiltshire, or wherever else we may set up our summer quarters."

"Is there any probability then, that the usual journey into Wiltshire will be omitted this year?"

"You ask too many questions at a time, dear Nell," answered her brother, smiling mysteriously; — "I can tell you nothing of the matter till we meet again.—So, good morning;—I could not stay another instant to save any of your lives!"

He then dashed out of the room, sprung upon the horse that waited for him in the street, and galloped out of sight in a moment.

Mrs. Somerville, amidst all the joy which this sudden turn in the affairs of Adela gave her, could not suppress a sigh as she reflected upon the accumulation of difficulties it would bring upon Lord Ennerdale.

If, as he had stated, Adela was so scrupulous in obedience to the mandates of a father who had denied her all countenance, how would she now, that her gratitude would be awakened by the obligations he

was conferring, increase in solicitude to comply with every wish he could form?—Even the Earl's hope of inducing her to correspond with him, might be frustrated by what was passing;—and in that case, what means would he possess of counteracting such obstacles as a lengthened absence, an enforced silence, and a too timid conscience?

All these apprehensions Mrs. Somerville communicated to Lord Ennerdale in writing, and supplicated to know, in what manner she could henceforth serve his cause?

He answered her by an earnest request that she would, the next day, indulge him with an interview at Lady Isabella Annesley's.

Their meeting was melancholy, though most friendly. Lord Ennerdale expressed the acutest anxiety as to the result of the new measures on which Mr. Cleveland had decided. He spoke of the interference of Julius with involuntary distrust of the motives by which it was dictated; yet, upon the whole, seemed generously pleased at the proofs of kindness, however long delayed,

which Adela was about to experience from the heads of her family. He persevered in his avowed intention of seeking gradually to win her consent to a private union; but told Mrs. Somerville, that he should systematically abstain from writing, till the first fervour of her sister's delight at the relenting disposition shewn by Mr. Cleveland had subsided. He begged that when he *did* hazard a letter, it might, for greater security from interception, go inclosed in one from herself, or, at least, be directed in her hand;—and, in conclusion, he supplicated that she would allow a copy to be taken of a picture of Adela which Mrs. Somerville had lately induced her to sit for.

She told him that it was now undergoing some alteration, but willingly promised to call upon the artist, and give the order he required, without delay.

They then parted, equally perplexed as to the future, though mutually pleased at having met.

When Julius next appeared in Cumberland Place, he announced, with greater satisfaction than the circumstance seemed to

demand, the success of his endeavours to alter his father's purpose respecting the journey into Wiltshire:—

"I have prevailed on him," cried he, "to let me engage, for the next two or three months, a small villa on the banks of the Thames, not far from Richmond. We shall take possession of it early in the course of next week; and thither," added he, rubbing his hands with infinite glee, "thither, Adela, you must be prepared to follow or accompany us."

To Adela, provided she was under the same roof with her father, all places were alike, and the only answer she made to this information was, that Richmond, being, as she had always heard, the most beautiful village near London, she should be delighted to visit it.

Mrs. Somerville and Alicia were more awake to conjecture and surprise. They asked their brother a multitude of questions touching his sudden prepossession in favour of a spot which they had never heard him speak of before with the smallest partiality; tried to discover whom he knew there, and

what could be the powerful object of attraction that induced him to prefer it, (since his father was willing to give up the customary plan of going to his family seat) to any of the water-drinking, or sea-bathing places.

He baffled all their enquiries; laughed at their perplexity; seemed in high spirits, and after a longer visit than usual, hearing Mrs. Somerville say, that she was going to a painter's to fetch home Adela's picture, disconcerted her a good deal by proposing to be of the party. She had no excuse ready, however, for declining his attendance, and therefore, with the best grace she could, accepted it. Adela, who, whilst sitting for this portrait, had been completely wearied of the painter's house, and all that it presented to her eyes, would gladly have excused herself from again re-entering it; but when the carriage was announced, Julius seized her arm, and insisted upon her going with them.

The sole apparent object of Mrs. Somerville's visit (the restitution of the picture) being effected, she would have felt some-

what embarrassed for a motive to protract her departure, had not Julius furnished a very sufficient one by the eagerness with which he requested to see every portrait in a state of any forwardness which the artist then had in hand. Whilst he and Adela were looking them over, Mrs. Somerville availed herself of the opportunity to give directions, in another part of the room, about the copy she wished to have immediately begun.

During this interval, Adela made the discovery, amongst the miniatures which her brother was most solicitously examining, of one, representing the *capricious beauty*, as she had always called her, whom, at the beginning of her residence in London, she had seen at the milliner's.

"Ah, here, at length, is a face I know!" cried she, regarding it with much pleasure—

"Do you, indeed?" said Julius, with quickness.

"Yes, but not even the name of her to whom it belongs," answered she, struck by the hurried accent in which he had spoken. —"I saw her once or twice when I first ar-

rived in town, and she is so beautiful, that I never have forgotten her."

"You really think her, then, very beautiful?"

"Why, don't *you*?"

This question was asked with an air of innocent surprise which appeared to Julius so irresistibly ludicrous, that he laughed immoderately; but not choosing to inform her why, and seeing Mrs. Somerville ready to depart, he drew her arm within his own, and accompanied the two sisters back to the carriage.

Not unmindful of her promised interference in the concerns of William Hampden, Adela now determined to write into Devonshire those details which she no longer had any prospect of communicating verbally.

She made known to William the revolution in her own affairs, and the step which she had taken in consequence, the day he dined at her sister's; and then enquired whether his wife had yet received from

Mrs. Forester any answer to her second letter.

"Yes," he replied, with an air of chagrin and bitterness, "exactly such an answer as we had reason to expect!"

He then shewed her a letter, written in the most elegant hand, filled with the warmest expressions of friendship, abounding in professions of the most tender concern; but announcing a total failure in its writer's endeavours to mollify the resentment of Sir Thomas, and bewailing in pathetic strains, the arbitrary and afflicting prohibition she had received, ever to renew the subject.

There ran through this laboured epistle a tone of exaggerated sentiment, of cant and hypocrisy, that very much disposed Adela at once to hate and to despise its dissembling writer. She gave it back to Hampden, however, without permitting herself to add to his irritation by an unqualified avowal of the ill opinion it had excited; but rather sought to revive his better hopes, by an assurance that, when once established at her father's, she would leave no effort unattempted to secure the active exertion

of that influence which, William had told her, he possessed over the secluded Baronet.

In the course of this day's visit, Mr. and Mrs. Somerville discovered in the deportment, manners, and conversation of the newly-married pair, so much to approve, that they found themselves irresistibly drawn to take a lively interest in their affairs. Adela had the pleasure also, in the evening, of seeing them introduced to, and most courteously received by, Lady Isabella, Mr. Annesley, and General Cleveland. To this last, she was particularly desirous that William should recommend himself, as his being in the same profession might, in some way or other, she thought, render such an acquaintance peculiarly advantageous to him.

CHAP. VI.

REMOVAL.

The moment was now arrived when Adela and her loved sister were compelled to part. Tender and mutual was the sorrow that accompanied their tearful adieus: Mr. Somerville feelingly participated in their regret, and the children hung round their youthful aunt, reproaching her, with almost angry earnestness, for having given them false hopes that she meant to spend the summer with them at Rosedown Court.

Lady Harriet Mordington, newly entrusted to the care of a highly-recommended governess, had been sent to the house of her father the preceding day. Mrs. Erington likewise, was already gone from Cumberland Place, and that very morning, had set out on a visit into Hampshire, previous to returning to her widowed home in Wales. Some intimation had been given her, that her company would, for a few weeks, be acceptable to her father; but

these she had affected not to understand: privately confessing to Mrs. Somerville, that being thoroughly acquainted with his temper, and, at the same time, knowing something of her own, she was well aware, that she could not commit a greater act of imprudence than to become his permanent guest:

"I have been emancipated too long," added she, "to return willingly to the yoke. Adela has more pliability, and may do better. Besides, the bondage will be new to her—and novelty, whilst it lasts, renders every thing endurable. Let me see how she will like her chains half a year hence!"

"Do you not know, my dear Alicia," said Mrs. Somerville, smiling, "that there is a method of wearing chains, which lightens their pressure, which *pads them with cotton*, nay, which makes them hang so loose as scarcely to be felt? I do in my conscience believe, that no one is more perfectly acquainted with this method than our sweetly-tempered Adela. She never suffers her imagination to give weight to trifles; and that being the case, her spirits

are seldom chafed—for of what but trifles are all the common provocations of life made up?"

"Of what but grains of dust," resumed Alicia, with quickness, "is the whole earth made up? Yet, collected together, do they not compose a huge and most substantial mass? So it is with trivial grievances, often reiterated; they, at length, constitute a torment quite colossal, which crushes, or casts into deep shade, every little blossom of happiness."

"This picture is palpably overcharged—Yet, at the present moment, I implore you not to depress Adela by holding it up to her contemplation."

"No, no," cried Mrs. Erington, laughing, "I have too much generosity to aim at instilling apprehension into *her* mind, as successfully as I have wrought conviction in *yours*."

Julius had promised, that the morning Mrs. Somerville went, he would call for Adela at two o'clock, and drive her down in his curricle to the Richmond Villa: but to avoid travelling in the heat of the day, the Somervilles were forced to separate from

her, and commence their long journey, at eight.

The last words (uttered with significant emphasis) which the affectionate Elinor addressed to her sister, as she quitted the house, were—

"Be stedfast—and be faithful!"

Mr. Somerville echoed them. Adela, smiling through her tears, seemed to promise the strictest observance of their import, and two minutes afterwards, the coach drove from the door.

Few things are more melancholy than the sensations experienced on turning from a group of departing friends to re-enter a large deserted dwelling, suddenly consigned to total and dreary silence! The contrast between what it now appears, and the bustle of the preceding moment—the cheerfulness of, perhaps, many preceding months, strikes a sadness to the heart almost as oppressive as a real calamity.

Two hoary-headed domestics, a man and his wife, who had outlived every other species of service, were alone remaining in the forlorn mansion as its guardians till the ensuing London season. The principal

rooms, of which every centre was occupied by piles of chairs, sofas, and tables, were divested of their carpets and curtains, and at once sounded hollow, and looked the image of discomfort. Every book was packed up; the pictures were all covered with paper; and the piano-forte was put into a case, ready to be conveyed away. Even Adela's own chamber was a scene of nearly similar confusion. It was strewed over with fragments of packing materials, and the refuse of her London wardrobe, exhibiting a heterogeneous mixture of old flowers, broken fans, ends of cord, cast-off gloves, and bits of matting. Amy, charged with her lady's trunks, had just departed for the early Richmond stage.

How to fill up the long interval till two o'clock, it was no easy matter to decide. She could not walk out, for the aged defender of the premises was too busily engaged in cording hampers, and nailing cases, to attend her. She retained no means of occupation nor any source of amusement. Thus circumstanced, she was reduced, for the first time in her life, to wish for that, now improbable relief—an

idle visitor; or for the faculty, still less attainable, of sleeping away the next four or five hours on her unmade bed.

Some old books of the opera, a few concert-bills, and half a dozen notes from different persons, enquiring after Mrs. Somerville during her confinement, afforded a slender reprieve to her *ennui*, and were read over with an attention they had probably been far from exciting at the time when they first came into their possessor's hands. But these feeble barriers against total listlessness, insipid as they proved, were sooner exhausted than replaced; and on their entire failure, Adela was driven to the desperate expedient of going down to see old Joseph complete his packages, and to offer her services in writing cards of direction. The sight of two sturdy porters, however, (the able and active assistants of Joseph's weak, though willing efforts) drove her away from the lower part of the house in a moment: Bridget, Joseph's wife, caught a glimpse of her as she flew back to the stairs, and civilly hastened forward to enquire what were her commands?

"I have none, Bridget, I thank you,"

answered Adela, "but merely came to know whether your husband wanted any directions written. If you can lend me a book, however, or supply me with any sort of needle-work, my purpose would be answered still better."

Books, old Bridget was not rich in; but with many excuses for letting her take so much trouble, she brought to Adela, in the parlour where she and the Somervilles had breakfasted, the border of a cap to hem, and charitably furnished her with a brass thimble, some entangled thread, and a crooked needle.

With these implements, which were thankfully accepted, Adela began her self-allotted task; she finished the cap-border, and then applied for all its component parts, and completed the whole operation. Old Bridget knew not how to express sufficient admiration of such expeditious proceedings, or sufficient gratitude for Miss Cleveland's condescension.

Meanwhile, two o'clock struck, and no Julius appeared. Adela, then was forced to entreat that Bridget would supply her with fresh employment. The good woman,

almost at a loss what to produce, at length dragged forth from a box in the garret, a coarse half-finished shirt of her husband's, which the fair sempstress as industriously toiled at, as if she had been labouring for a precarious subsistence. Whilst her hands were thus employed, her mind kept pace with their activity; she anticipated her approaching meeting with her father; she thought of Lord Ennerdale, she revolved the events of the last three months, she meditated upon the gradual progress of their attachment, and vainly, yet most fervently, wished for penetration to foresee what would ultimately be its fate.

Whilst these reflections engaged her, four o'clock arrived, and Julius, soon after, stopped at the door.

He made some excuses for being so late, and as they swiftly drove off, asked her how she had contrived to fill up her time the whole morning?

"I amused myself," answered she, smiling, "in ruminating upon your faults! Don't you know, that this is invariably the fate of every person who keeps another waiting?"

"Oh, then you were in no want of recreation, I can answer for it! And I give you joy, that you hit upon so fruitful a theme."

He then, to her enquiries respecting the disposition towards her which her father now appeared to entertain, answered, that she must be neither hurt nor surprised if she found herself denied an interview till the moment of sitting down to table. It was his father's determination, he said, to avoid any privacy at their first meeting; and he had, consequently, invited several people to dinner, with whom his acquaintance was but of recent date, and who knew nothing of his domestic history.

"You are to be introduced to them," continued he, "as the daughter of their entertainer, without any reference to your new installment, in the house: and I earnestly recommend to you, to suppress all indications of emotion, and to subdue, as much as possible, all appearance of confusion. You will take your place, as a thing of course, at the head of the table; you will talk with, and shew attention to your neighbours; and the more calmly and col-

lectedly you can do so, the more credit you will gain in my father's eyes. This mode of reception, perhaps you think, will not be very tender or paternal! My dear Adela, put tenderness and fine feelings, on the present occasion, out of your thoughts! They are not dealt in at our house; and after all, as my father has nothing to forgive, or to found a pathetic scene upon, there appears the less necessity for an unwitnessed interview."

Adela knew not whether to rejoice or grieve at this account of Mr. Cleveland's plan. She thought it cold, distant, and forbidding; yet, ignorant what conduct would have been expected from her, and most approved, had a private introduction taken place, she endeavoured to become reconciled to the chilling determination now adopted.

The light vehicle and rapid coursers of her brother, conveyed her to her journey's end in time abundantly sufficient to dress for dinner. Amy stood at the hall door in readiness to welcome and conduct her to her appointed room; and Julius promised, when he went down from his own, to

knock at her door that they might descend together.

The house, though not large, was well distributed, and perfectly commodious. Its situation, on the verdant banks of the Thames, was beautiful; and it was fitted up with all the luxury and taste of a fairy palace. Adela's apartment, one of the best it afforded, was cheerful and elegant; it faced the river, from which it was only divided by a sloping lawn, dotted with shrubs and trees.

"Ah, dear young Missy," cried the voluble and faithful Amy, "this be something like a home!—Me so happy! You be now where you *should* be, with good papa to love, and make you great lady,—and kind brother to drive you about, and make you merry,—and servants all round, to do what you bid, and to call you their own mistress! Ah, this be the brightest day poor Amy ever see!"

Adela, whose heart was full, and whose spirits were agitated, threw her arms round this fond and worthy creature's neck, and with sensations less partaking of joy, than of mingled gratitude and apprehension,

sobbed upon her bosom. Amy's tears flowed fast from sympathy; but smiles accompanied them, and even whilst she wept she persevered in ejaculating—

"Me never so happy in my whole life before!"

When Julius gave the signal agreed upon at her door, and his sister joined him, he attentively surveyed her countenance, and shaking his head, cried:—

"My poor dear Adela, you do not look your best, and I am heartily sorry for it! What have you been about, to occasion those red eyes, and pale cheeks? Did you think it necessary to prepare yourself to sit for the picture of a Magdalen? I assure you that Floras and Hebes are much more to my father's taste. He is a great judge of female beauty, but he likes it to be blooming and sparkling, and it would have been of infinite advantage to you to have shone upon him with all your brightest lustre.—Come, cheer up, my 'pensive nun,' and let him have the gratification of seeing you admired, and of learning to think you worth being proud of.—Your outside, you know, is all that you can yet expect him

to attach any value to—he must have time allowed him to get acquainted with the good little heart within."

This exhortation forced from her a smile, and Julius seizing the happy moment, quickened his steps, and, arm in arm with her, entered the drawing-room ere its traces had quite dispersed.

A groupe of gentlemen, among whom stood her father, were conversing near a window; and upon a sofa, at some distance, sat two ladies.

Julius, now, intentionally raising his voice, though only to remand his friend Wasp into the hall, Mr. Cleveland turned his head, and on perceiving by whom his son was accompanied, stepped calmly forward, saying to Adela—

"I believe you have not the honour of knowing Mrs. and Miss Rivers:—let me introduce you."

Julius relinquished her arm, and she then found that she was expected to follow her father towards the two ladies who occupied the sofa.

They rose as she advanced, and Mr. Cleveland, after uttering a brief form of pre-

sentation, left her to find for herself a seat near them, and, as it likewise appeared, to find subjects of conversation. But shaking and discomposed as she was, though to outward appearance, tranquil, it was no enviable or easy task to provide small-talk for two entire strangers, the youngest of whom looked reserved, the eldest of whom was obviously more solicitous for the approach of Julius, or some of the men near the window, than desirous to profit by the civilities of her handsome hostess.

To this deeply-rouged and formidable lady, Adela had scarcely courage to address herself: but preferring the chance of a quiet repulse from the daughter, she said something about the beauty of the place, and of the Thames, and asked her if she was fond of sailing?

Miss Rivers replied to this easy and simple overture with so much gentleness and good-breeding, that Adela, pleased at her success, returned to the charge; started fresh topics, and very soon found means to engage her new acquaintance in a cheerful and unconstrained dialogue.

Just before dinner was announced, Tal-

bot Cleveland made his appearance, and, as Adela shortly discovered, came an expected guest. He was delighted to see her, but on his guard against betraying how particularly delighted to see her *there*.

Mrs. Rivers revived at his approach, and made room for him on the sofa between her daughter and herself. She had listened with cold disregard to the previous conversation of her youthful companions; but was now profuse in volubility and smiles, as if anxious to make up for the time she had lost in unwillingly listening to the chit-chat of two insipid girls.

The name of Rivers, it had struck Adela, the moment she heard it, was not new to her; and now, on beholding the mother's undisguised eagerness to engross the notice, either for herself or her daughter, of any, or every beau she could enlist into her service, the conversation that had once passed at Mr. Annesley's concerning this lady, recurred forcibly to her remembrance, and she felt assured that she saw its object before her.

"But the daughter," thought Adela, "Lord Ennerdale said was amiable, and he pitied her for having so obtrusive and unpleasant a mother!"

To this daughter then, modest in demeanour, and prepossessing in countenance, she turned with renewed alacrity, and the discourse which Talbot's entrance had suspended, was resumed.

During dinner, the first at which Adela had ever presided as *lady of the house*, the consciousness that whatever she said or did was scrutinizingly observed by her father, restrained the ease of her manners, and gave them a sort of trepidation, which she found it impossible entirely to shake off. Yet, upon the whole, she had reason to flatter herself that Mr. Cleveland was tolerably well pleased with her, since, towards the end of the repast, he invited her to drink a glass of wine with him; and when the dessert was set on, selected from one of the dishes placed near him some remarkably fine fruit, and sent it up to her, saying,

"At my recommendation, Adela, taste those strawberries; they are better fla-

voured than any I have met with the whole season."

From such a hand, Adela would have thought them well flavoured had they partaken of all the crûdeness of the wildest crab-apple! She received them with a glow of pleasure, and a bow of soft acknowledgment, which, though silent, spoke volumes. Her brother's expressive eyes sparkled, and were full of generous congratulation; and Talbot seemed half ready to start from his seat, and give his uncle's hand a cordial shake.

Mrs. Rivers, her daughter had told Adela, was only in that neighbourhood for a part of the summer, being on a visit to her brother, who was one of the company present.

The other gentlemen who made up the party, with the exception of Talbot and Julius, were none of them much younger than their grave host, and all had residences in some one of the neighbouring villages which so beautifully skirt the Thames. The personage of chief importance at table, was a sociable and lively old peer, who was placed next to Adela, and whilst he chatted to her with the good-humour of a father,

shewed an evident admiration of her, extremely gratifying to Mr. Cleveland's vanity.

Never had Adela so much wished to please, for never had she before felt sensible how much depended on the sentiments of partiality or criticism which she might awaken. The conclusion of the meal found her divested of all painful diffidence, serene, and nearly cheerful. Her pleasant neighbour, proud of his success, relaxed not in his efforts to entertain her; and, whilst she listened to him with the readiest politeness, she was anxious not to be deficient in attention to any one else.

"This must do!" thought Julius, as he delightedly observed her. "My father cannot but be struck by the perfect elegance, the unaffected propriety of such manners! She is the sweetest girl, almost, in the whole world!"

In whose favour this saving clause, this significant *almost*, was mentally pronounced, may hereafter, perhaps, be explained.

When the ladies rose from table, Mr. Cleveland said—

"As the evening is so fine, perhaps,

Adela, Mrs. and Miss Rivers may like a little excursion in your brother's boat. You will, in that case, give the necessary orders; the servants who row it can be ready in a moment."

Adela was most thankful for this hint, which relieved her so happily from the unassisted fatigue of finding amusement for one, who, by any of her own sex, did not appear as if she would deign to *accept* amusement. This unconciliating lady agreed to the boat-scheme with passive and frigid composure; her daughter anticipated it with evident pleasure; and during nearly two hours, it afforded to Adela all the satisfaction which she was capable of experiencing in the society of Mrs. Rivers.

CHAP. VII.

COMPLIMENTS.

When the female trio returned to the house, and tea was brought in, the gentlemen who had formed the dinner party, all made their appearance in the drawing-room. Lord

Rothbury, Adela's aged but agreeable admirer, again placed himself next to her, and after some conversation upon common topics, struck by the tone of her voice, as she called to her brother, who was standing at a little distance, he suddenly asked her whether she sung?

"There are musical accents in *speaking* as well as in *singing*," cried he, "and sometimes the two faculties do not meet in the same individual: but I hope that in you, they are united, for you look as if I should not have to pay the penalty of a two hours supplication for a five minutes amusement! —Indeed, when I find that this is likely to be the case, I often withdraw my pretensions almost immediately, and sit down better satisfied with the lady's firmness in resisting entreaty, than with the idleness of those who persevere so long in bestowing it."

Adela cast her eyes towards Julius, anxious to ascertain how he thought her father would approve a compliance with this intimation; and seeing him nod with a look of encouragement, she opened the pianoforte, and sat down to play and sing the

first easy air that occurred to her remembrance.

She had, at one period of her life, because she was told it would please her father, been particularly ambitious to become a good musician; but afterwards, finding him still wholly neglectful of her, she, in a great measure, renounced the endeavour, and to many accomplishments of a less showy nature had devoted more time, and attained more excellence. In speaking modern languages, in drawing, in reading aloud, she was surpassed by few—as a musician she had little other merit than feeling, and a voice naturally sweet-toned, though deficient in brilliancy and compass. Since her residence in London, where she had heard so many admirable performers, she was become fastidious and wholly distrustful of her own powers—and except to avoid the pain of being urged, never either sung or played unless to her most intimate friends.

The courteous old nobleman, however, professed himself delighted by her humble performance, and in all probability, professed no more than he felt; many auditors not being gifted with the skill to discern so

much merit in *conquering*, as in knowing gracefully how to *avoid* difficulties.

Unambitious of further distinction, she resigned her seat as speedily as she could, and Miss Rivers was then dispatched by her mother to occupy the vacancy. The moment she began, her voice, soft, penetrating, and flexible, recalled to Adela's memory the interesting singer she had heard the evening Lord Ennerdale related the history of the hornpipe; and the longer she listened, the longer she looked at the unaffectedly-modest countenance of Miss Rivers, the more convinced she became of her identity with the charming young woman she had so much admired. Already disposed to feel most favourably inclined towards her, this discovery still further increased that disposition; and she stood by the instrument during the whole of her performance, with an air of such sincere and animated approbation, that Lord Rothbury, more an observer of expressive *looks*, than a judge of expressive *music*, declared to Talbot, his next neighbour, "that Miss Cleveland's perfect exemption from envy of her companion's (perhaps) superior talents,

was more beautiful, more worthy of admiration, than the most faultless strain that ever was warbled forth by a syren!"

When his lordship and the other guests had departed, Talbot excepted, for whom a bed-room had been prepared, Mr. Cleveland, with an air expressive of no inconsiderable disappointment, asked his daughter how it happened, that she had so strangely neglected her music?

Adela was less mortified by this enquiry than her brother, who hastily answered:— "She does *not* neglect it, sir! I have heard her practising very often in Cumberland Place."

"But did she take lessons of any good master? Of what use can it be to her to confirm herself by practice in all her present faults?—She has no management of voice, no ductility, no command of her own powers, her whole performance sounds so languid and timid, that, when put into competition with that of half the girls one meets with, it is really pitiable!"

Adela seeing the colour mount into Julius's face, and observing him on the point of speaking again with great warmth, pressed

her foot upon his under the table, and directed towards him so supplicating a look, that wisely suppressing what he had to say, he suddenly turned to Talbot, and challenged him to play at chess.

Mr. Cleveland, who had been walking about the apartment whilst addressing to his daughter such flattering remarks, had seen, in his progress down the room, this motion of her foot, and the glance to repress her brother's impetuosity which accompanied it.

He took another turn or two after making the observation, and then approaching Adela, said, with more gentleness,

"If a skilful master can be prevailed on to come so far to give you lessons, will you apply with diligence to profit by his instructions?"

"Yes, sir, and I shall be most grateful to you for providing me with such assistance."

"Well, then, Talbot shall enquire who teaches his sister Barbara, and"...

"Oh, for charity, dear sir!" interrupted Julius, discontinuing his game, and abruptly looking round, "don't let us convert this

house into a school for the fine arts upon the model of Barbara's studying-room! It will distract us to hear Adela straining her voice, hour after hour, to the pitch of a screaming jackal!—You'll never be able to bear it, sir,—you won't indeed! And besides, it will make the poor girl as thin as a skeleton, and infallibly destroy all her good looks."

"Good looks, in these days, are nothing without the concomitant of a highly-finished education; Adela is young enough to repair many of the omissions in hers, and if she is solicitous for *my* approbation, she will not neglect the now offered means."

"There is nothing, sir," said Adela, "that will make me so happy as the power of proving by my unwearied exertions, how highly I value your good opinion. You will allow, I am sure, for deficiencies which I am not able to overcome; I have not the eminent capacity for music which Miss Rivers possesses; but I can at least emulate her industry, though I must despair of ever equalling her sweetness, and facility of execution."

"You have *more* than her sweetness of temper!" cried Julius, with no great sweetness, just then, in his own; and turning suddenly back to his game, he discovered, with much surprise, that his queen and a castle both stood in check. He pondered for a few minutes on the best mode of relieving them from such jeopardy; saw nothing which could immediately be done, and losing patience, overset all the pieces, and acknowledged himself vanquished. Then, seeing the beams of a full moon streaming in through the windows, he made Adela throw on a shawl, and told her to come out with him for a walk.

She complied; and in passing her father, asked whether he would venture to accompany them?

"No, child; I am afraid of the night air."

His calling her *child* was so gratifying to her heart, that had she, from the preceding conversation, nourished any pique, that single word would have been sufficient to dispel it.

Talbot remained with his uncle; and the

brother and sister, strolling to the edge of the lawn, paced backwards and forwards, close to the river, for above half an hour.

Her mind full of poetical images, all awakened by the beauty of such a night, enjoyed in such a scene, Adela longed to communicate some of the descriptive recollections her memory was so richly fraught with to her companion; but he seemed infinitely more disposed to descant resentfully upon what had just been passing *within* doors, than to listen with satisfaction to the sublimest quotations in praise of what he saw *without*.

Adela gently checked him at the very beginning of these murmurs.

"This is ground, my dear Julius," said she, "which I 'fear to tread.'—Never, never, when we are alone, let us permit ourselves to choose for subjects of discussion the slight offences inflicted by my father. There is no consolation, no advantage to be derived from such a practice. It only aggravates discontent — serves to magnify mole-hills into mountains—and, in a well-disposed mind, leaves behind it a feeling of self-reproach for having forfeited, by after-

repinings, all the merit of previous humility. Besides," added she, with less seriousness, "I can very truly assure you, that my father's comments on the slenderness of my musical abilities, scarcely gave to my vanity the slightest shock! Since I quitted Dr. Hampden's, where I was the only nightingale of the party, I have learnt pretty justly to appreciate those talents which, in his house, I might be tempted to overrate, merely because I had never heard them surpassed; but my estimation of them has now found its proper level. I know my own inferiority, and I regret it only, because it seems to my father a source of disappointment."

"Well," well, cried Julius, "I'll say no more about it!—If you don't make a good boy of me, my little temperate monitress, I shall despair of myself."

Soon after this, they returned into the house, and found Mr. Cleveland on the point of retiring to rest. He bade his son and daughter good night with nearly equal cordiality; invited Talbot to continue with them another day, and proceeded to his dressing-room.

When he was gone; "I must," said Talbot to his two cousins, "detain you a moment, to give some account of what has been the subject of my uncle's conversation during your absence. He spoke," continued the young man, "with great and even animated approbation of Adela's deportment during dinner, and, indeed, throughout the whole day. He asserted that her manners are as much superior to those of Miss Rivers, or of almost any other girl he knows, as that young lady's skill in music is superior to my cousin's — and of her claims to distinction for personal attractions, I assure you he uttered such things, as, in Adela's presence, I have not the courage to repeat!"

"We shall make this girl vain, at last!" cried Julius. "But, Talbot, did not my father utter one poor little syllable in praise of the good temper with which she bore his unprovoked attack?"

"It was *not* unprovoked, my dear brother," said Adela; "he was mortified at my being so totally eclipsed by a young person so nearly my own age, whom he thinks, had I taken greater pains, I might now perhaps

have nearly equalled. But good night. We have said enough, and, indeed, too much upon this foolish subject. Good night to you both."

The soothing reflection that she was now, in all probability, permanently established beneath a father's roof, unless banished thence by her own misconduct, accompanied her to her apartment, and after giving additional fervour to the pious gratitude of her customary evening worship, attended her to her pillow, and imparted to her innocent dreams, a character of the purest felicity. Even the remembrance of Lord Ennerdale, for a while, lost its distinctness; her father, almost exclusively, filled her thoughts. She reflected upon the rapture it would give her, to succeed in awakening an interest in his heart—to hear him own that she was becoming essential to his happiness, and she meditated with delight upon the affectionate exultation with which her brother would view so auspicious a result of his own friendly interposition.

The following day being Sunday, Mr. Cleveland and his three youthful compa-

nions, received, during breakfast, a gracious offer from Lord Rothbury of seats at church in his own pew. They accepted this civility very readily; and when the service was over, he pressed them to dine and spend the day with him.

"Does your lordship," said Julius, laughing, "give dinners to ladies? To young ladies, too?"

"Every age," replied the good-humoured Peer, "has its privileges. Some which I have lost, you now possess; others which you cannot yet boast, I have happily attained. Amongst these last, is the undoubted right, at sixty-three, of inviting, receiving, and honouring as she merits, so lovely a guest as your sister: but had *I* a sister, as fair, as attractive, she should not, in return, dine with you, young man!"

At the hospitable mansion of this cheerful nobleman, Adela spent a day of the most rational satisfaction. His library, pictures, garden and conservatory, furnished successive objects of inspection; and his own conversation, plain but sensible,

familiar but instructive, contributed largely to the general entertainment.

He had, in addition to the Cleveland family, two other guests, a lady and her son, who were his distant relations. The latter of these, was a Major in the army, and had not been long returned (for the re-establishment of his health) from the burning plains of India. He was still a young man, and though disease had, in some measure, "*quench'd and allay'd the noble fire within,*" there still were indications, in his open countenance, of an animation of character, and in his conversation were proofs of sense, and just feeling, which added to the manly elegance of his person and manners, seemed to have ensured to him the warmest partiality of his benevolent host.

The share contributed by Mr. Cleveland towards the entertainment of the day, had Adela been willing to detect a failure in her father, she might perhaps have been tempted to think, was not very brilliant.

Though far from being a man of strong intellect, there was an imposing dignity about him, a plausible tone of deliberation

in every thing he said, which threw dust in the eyes of many an inaccurate judge, and not unfrequently, made him pass for a deep thinker, and a penetrating observer. But often, when he looked the most profound, his mind was employed rather in meditating how best to *appear* sagacious, than in seeking for cogent arguments calculated to *prove* him so. To him might, with some justice, have been applied these lines of the satirist, so descriptive and so celebrated:

"What's the bent brow, or neck in thought reclin'd?
"The body's wisdom to conceal the mind.
"Oh, be this truth eternal ne'er forgot,
"Solemnity's the cover for a sot."

Mr. Cleveland, however, was not what is absolutely understood by the harsh epithet here employed. But he was shallow and vain; wise enough to be sometimes aware of his insufficiency, prudent enough seldom to hazard betraying it, and jealous beyond all example of incurring the suspicion of mere human fallibility. It would be toilsome even to the brightest wit, or the most transcendant genius, *always* to be

a wit, *always* to be a genius! What must the toil then have been, of appearing always wise, to a man, who, if he had known how to do himself justice, would contentedly have submitted to appear always humble, and always superficial?

CHAP. VIII.

MYSTERY.

ADELA had not been installed a week in her new abode, ere she had reason experimentally to feel, how true it is, that there is no condition, whatever may be its allurements in perspective, to which, when attained, some draw-back is not annexed.

Her father's unfortunate prepossession in favour of that talent in which she least excelled, and his extreme solicitude for her acquiring it in greater perfection, would have been, to any temper, prone to irritation, a source of torment scarcely endurable. Not satisfied with the three lessons every week which she received both from

an instrumental and vocal instructor, he tied her down, in the intervals of their attendance, to such close and constant practice, that she was scarcely for a moment removed from the piano-forte.

Nothing could exceed the disgust at all this, of Julius, except the patience of his sister. She was weary, indeed; but injured neither in temper nor in health; and she thought that so much was due to the wishes of a parent—she reflected that her present situation (conferred by the relenting kindness of that parent) presented so many advantages to counterbalance this partial molestation, that it would have been ingratitude of the deepest dye to have either openly or secretly repined :—

"I will perform my appointed task," she would sometimes tell her brother, "not with compelled diligence only, but with honest and steady cheerfulness. I forget who it is that says, '*Submission, in order to be respectable, should be uncomplaining; accompanied by murmurs, it becomes servile.*' I quite enter into the spirit of that thought; it is scarcely ever absent from my recollection, and my great ambition is, to act up

to it with all the perseverance of which I am capable."

"Meanwhile, you are spoilt for a companion, and rendered intolerable even as an inmate. I should have as much comfort in living with a professed public singer, who had not three ideas in the world distinct from the pitiful drudgery incident to her occupation. You allow yourself to be converted into a nuisance and a pest, instead of a rational friend, and desirable associate."

"Have patience, Julius; the evil, if it is such, may, perhaps, be of short duration: and would you not rather submit to it a little longer, than see me again an alien from my father's favour?—again discarded from my natural home?"

"Do you bid me be patient whilst listening to the possibility of so outrageous an alternative? Adela, were you ever driven from his house again, I should have very little scruple in forswearing it myself! He could, probably, much better resign himself to such a loss, than I could now bear to part with you!"

Adela affectionately held out her hand to

him, and was beginning to speak, when seeing her father, who had been out on horseback, ride up to the gate, she flew to her post at the instrument, half-dreading to have been observed, for one instant, off duty.

There were days, however, when a greater degree of liberty was unavoidably allowed her. The recess of Parliament had not yet begun, and Mr. Cleveland, who was a Member, and often thought himself under the necessity of attending the debates, and giving his silent vote in person, was sometimes, for this purpose, detained in town to a very late hour. On these occasions, Adela and her brother, after a sociable dinner, sallied forth to enjoy an evening walk; or, trusting herself alone with him in his boat, she spent many of her pleasantest hours in gliding along the smooth surface of the Thames, engaged either in surveying the many elegant villas on its margin, or, when able to prevail on Julius to row her beyond the immediate danger of meeting other parties, employed in reading to him aloud.

On one of these excursions, during which

he had several times held the boat nearly stationary, just opposite to a shady garden belonging to one of the handsomest mansions upon the banks, Adela thought she perceived, as the faint remains of twilight began to render distant objects uncertain, a figure dressed in white, wandering beneath the trees that skirted the water's edge, and, in that place, concealed the house from observation. She was going to make some remark on the romantic appearance of this vision, when Julius, suddenly splashing his oars into the water, directed his course with all the precipitation he could use towards the spot this figure occupied. Adela expected to see her take flight: but notwithstanding that they rapidly approached, she still, though receding a few paces, remained in view.

At length the little vessel gained the shore; and Julius hastily lashing it to the stem of a tree, sprang lightly upon the turf, and advanced towards the (now retreating) lady.

"Can you," cried he, speaking with some caution, yet loud enough to be heard by his sister, "can you come into the boat to us?

Where are they all? I have watched for this moment with an impatience which no words can describe! Can you come? And will you, for a few instants, make me so supremely happy?

"They dined at Wimbleton," answered the lady, "and perhaps will not return before eleven o'clock. Is that (though I scarcely need ask) your sister?"

"It is.—Give me your hand, and let me lead you to her."

The lady here paused, and then speaking again in a lower tone of voice, Adela lost the purport of her words, and only heard Julius eagerly replying—

"She will have no curiosity—she will make no remarks that can distress you."

The first of these, was an assertion which Adela's present sensations most strongly contradicted, for never had so powerful a degree of curiosity before assailed her. The nameless lady, however, appearing disposed to confide in it without dispute, threw over her head a light veil which had hung upon her arm, and allowed Julius to take her hand, and conduct her towards the boat.

Adela attended to their proceedings in determined silence. Her new companion, after ascending the little bark, disengaged herself from her assistant's hold, and stepped forward fearlessly to the seat on which its previous occupant was placed:

"I am ashamed of this intrusion," cried she; "but will you permit me, for a few minutes, to sit beside you, and to participate in the pleasures of your little voyage?"

Adela civilly made room for her, but still she was reluctant to speak; and the fair stranger (for such, 'by the courtesy of England,' every lady seen by twilight, and under a veil, is entitled to be called) accepting this tacit permission, sat down; and Julius immediately pushed the boat from the land.

"Which way shall we go?" enquired he, addressing the incognita.

"Away from the haunts of men," answered she; "row towards Hampton."

Scrupulously obedient, he instantly complied, and for some time proceeded with the utmost activity and speed.

"Do not," cried the lady, at length, speaking with all the softness which the

tenderest interest could inspire, "do not so cruelly exert yourself:— pray, row more moderately."

"I will," he answered, relaxing his efforts. "It was for the sake of enjoying my good fortune more securely, that I at first so vigorously laboured. But here we are beyond the sight of houses, or the ears of prying curiosity. Here we may converse in safety."

"I shall not, however," resumed she, playfully, "indulge *you* with the sole felicity of talking: my aim will be, to try whether I can break the spell that seems to enchain the tongue of your sister! Yet, perchance, she scorns

't'unlock her lips
'In this unhallowed air!'

Adela felt the reproof conveyed in these words, and was half ashamed to have incurred it; yet, so strangely circumstanced, held in such ignorance who this new associate might be, what could she say? Her thoughts really *were* spell-bound, and till some question should be addressed to her,

requiring an answer, she found it impossible to devise a single rational sentence.

Julius seemed aware of her true feelings, and as if to relieve her perplexity, talked fluently himself, ascribing her silence to the fatigue incident to the vocal exertions which she was daily condemned to make:—

"You would pity her," said he, "if you knew the hard service her poor little chest is perpetually called upon to perform! No town-cryer was ever forced to exert his lungs with more strenuous perseverance. It will be a mercy if her constitution bears up against the severity of such ceaseless toil."

"Does it not terribly weaken your genuine fondness for music?" enquired the unknown, turning to Adela.

"I fear it has not increased it," answered she.

"Oh, no—I am certain it cannot! Even our pleasures are no longer such than whilst they are wholly spontaneous. But why do you not sometimes plead inability, or lassitude, and solicit a reprieve?"

"Inability I have never experienced, and

my lassitude is only mental! I feel it not personally."

"And are you so scrupulously honourable as to disdain a little equivocation between the two species of feeling? Could you not bear to substitute fatigue of body for that of mind?"

Adela laughed, but waved any positive answer to this question; and the lady then directed the conversation to other subjects.

She spoke with equal taste and admiration of the beauties of that part of the country; asked Adela (as if knowing that she drew) whether she had sketched any views of the scenery round Richmond? And adverting next to her recent abode in London, she seemed particularly solicitous to discover with what impressions, upon the whole, she had left it?

Adela replied to all these topics with good-breeding, though with conciseness; and the stranger appeared well satisfied with the degree of complacency her unsought attentions had obtained.

At the end of half an hour, she began to express a wish of being re-landed.

"Not yet," cried Julius, earnestly, "Oh, not yet, I conjure you!"

"But suppose the good friends with whom I am an inmate should anticipate my return? Has your provident genius any admissible excuse to suggest to me for the whim of this trip?"

"Tell them that you were with Miss Cleveland."

"In so doing, it is certain that I should be drawing upon myself nothing but honour; yet, as it is my misfortune not to have become acquainted with Miss Cleveland in quite the regular routine of things, some puzzling after-enquiries might be put to me, which it would be rather difficult to answer. No;—you must consent to turn back, and I must persist in being prudent."

"Well, then—Will you purchase my compliance—my reluctant compliance, by the bribe of only one of those simple little airs I have heard you so exquisitely sing?"

"Is it possible, that you can have any longings for music still unsatisfied? Were you not complaining of the surfeit you have of it daily at your house?"

"I complain of its monopoly of my sister's time, to the exclusion of all other amusement: but believe me not such a Goth as to have quarrelled with the talent because one of its possessors is unhappily condemned too frequently to exert it."

The stranger exacted no further entreaty, but with mingled vivacity and sweetness began a spirited and exhilarating air calculated, at once, to prove so much skill in the performer, and to excite so much animation in the hearer, that Adela was enchanted; and Julius, she saw, as the newly-risen moon threw its clear light upon his face, sat listening with looks of rapture, that gave a sparkling lustre to his eyes, which, bright as they were, she had never seen them emit before.

The arch musician, when she ceased, dipped her fair hand for an instant in the stream on which they were floating, and with a sportiveness inimitably graceful, lightly dashed towards him the drops with which it was moistened, saying with affected reproach—

"Turn your head another way, I beseech you, for I can't bear to see you look

so stupid and so unmoved, after I have been taking such pains to amuse you!—What can you be dreaming about?"

Julius drew a deep sigh, and exclaimed, "Dreaming indeed! I was meditating upon the possibility of taking from such felicity its only draw-back—insecurity!"

"And thereby robbing it, perhaps, my good friend, of half its zest! But now, for pity's sake, make haste and guide me back; I have played truant till I really begin to be quite in a fright."

Being arrived at the spot whence she had first embarked, the lively stranger very politely thanked Adela for having granted her admission; bade her good night, and committing herself to the care of Julius, was safely handed from the boat.

In his way with her across a part of the lawn, he anxiously said—

"When shall I see you again? What are your plans for to-morrow?"

"I am going, with three or four of our party, to see Hampton Court."

He then enquired whether some person, whose name Adela could not distinguish, would be with her? And on her answer-

ing in the negative, cried—"Then I will meet you there!"

And kissing her hand, he allowed her to hasten towards the house, whilst he returned himself, with less expedition, to the boat.

A mutual silence now prevailed between the brother and sister during a considerable interval. At length Julius broke it—

"What's the matter, Adela?" cried he, half laughing; "Why won't you speak?"

"Is it not rather more natural," said she, "that I should wait to hear *you* speak?"

"Why, my good little sister, the whole substance of what I should say, were I to hold forth for the next three hours, might be comprised in Rosalind's energetic—'*Oh, that thou didst but know, how many fathom deep I am in love!*'"

"There needs no Rosalind to tell me that. And the lady does not seem to be much more in doubt than myself. But, dearest Julius, who is she? Are there any impediments to the public avowal of your attachment? Are you apprehensive that my father will discountenance it?"

"Ah, barbarous girl! You better succeed in inflicting a chill *without* the aid of cold water, than she did *with*. That question has frozen me into an icicle."

"Then you really ought not to have admitted me into this half sort of confidence; you ought not, my dear brother to have brought the lady and me together."

"And why not? You are not more innocent, more pure, in every respect, than she is herself! An intercourse with her may honour—it can never contaminate you."

"Then why is there so much mystery attached to your acquaintance with her? Why is it to be equally unknown to *her* friends, and to *yours*, that these interviews pass between you? Why is her very name held a secret? Ah, dear Julius, are all these circumstances of unequivocal propriety?"

"Come, come," cried he, with some impatience, "a truce with such close catechising! I begi to grow exceedingly weary of it! Make yourself as easy as you can:—say nothing of all this, at home; and, for your life, harbour no injurious sus-

picicions of the admirable creature you have had the happiness, this evening, of being admitted to converse with."

Adela could not forbear laughing at this summary, but perfectly characteristic mode of silencing her doubts. Anger had constituted no part of what she had experienced on the recent occurrence. Surprise was her first emotion, and as that had subsided, regret and concern took its place. Every thing clandestine gave to her ingenuous nature, a feeling resembling pain. She now saw a brother, for whom her affection was daily augmenting, madly in love with a being whose powers of fascination had appeared to her almost irresistible; she perceived that his passion was encouraged, nay reciprocated by its object; and she plainly discerned that both parties were aware of obstacles from their respective families, which, as far Adela could decide, might be insurmountable.

Such observations were most grievous to her: but seeing that remonstrance would be wholly vain, she repressed all inclination to renew it, and sought comfort from

her long-established rule of endeavouring to hope the best.

On disembarking at their father's villa, they learnt that he was returned from town, and had brought with him his two nieces, Barbara and Jemina Cleveland.

Julius listened to this information with no very complacent feelings. He was silent a moment; and then, wishing Adela joy of her agreeable guests, said he should go and while away the remainder of the evening at Lord Rothbury's.

Accordingly, he scampered off, and she repaired to the drawing-room.

Very different was the prompt civility with which the two sisters now advanced to meet her, from the air of frigid inattention which they had so often manifested towards her in less prosperous days. Adela Cleveland at the head of her father's establishment, they seemed to regard as a personage totally distinct from Adela Cleveland almost unowned, residing at the house of her half sister. Their courtesy was profuse—their admiration of the charming villa was excessive—and their delight to see her look so well, quite sentimental!

Jemima, she found, was to return home the next day; but Barbara had been invited by Mr. Cleveland to stay a week:—"I thought," said he, addressing his daughter, "that to bring you home an associate who is so excellent and indefatigable a musician, would excite you to emulation, and confirm you in diligence. I have made her pack up several duets, which I shall expect you to practise together; and as you both learn of the same master, you may let him hear, when he comes on Wednesday, how you acquit yourselves."

Adela trembled at the work which she saw was cut out for her; and Jemima, notwithstanding her ambition to stand high in the favour of her uncle, could not refrain from laughing a little, at his prodigious and unwearied passion for all that related to an accomplishment in which he was himself so totally unskilled.

When Julius returned home, his father had already retired; and hoping the ladies had likewise made their exit, he ventured to take a peep at the drawing-room door.

"What, still down stairs?" cried he, seeing himself observed, and therefore

obliged to advance. "Why, Adela, you are later than ever, to-night! How do you do, Bab? How do you do, Mima? What have you been about, this last fortnight, in town? When do you leave it? And how comes it, my poor girls, that you both return into the country, spinsters as you arrived? It's scandalous to think how many journies to London it costs the poor fathers and mothers of modern times, before they can dispose of their female progeny. Year after year, the half-desponding souls bring their eight months savings up to market; furbish themselves out anew; go every where; adorn themselves in spotless white; yet, as some cruel rhymer observes—

> 'Still find their ends miscarry,
> 'And dress like brides, but nevery marry!'

The sisters, wisely disguising their pique at this attack under a well-feigned laugh, declared he was the rudest creature in existence, but mutually disclaimed every wish or intention of marrying at all.

"That," resumed Julius, "is the customary assertion of nearly the whole race of unwedded ladies, young and old, from Mrs.

Lucretia Macphyllida, to Miss Jemima Cleveland, both inclusive. Believe them who will! But come, light your candles, and *trip, trip, good Aubreys*, to bed."

Adela accompanied them to their apartment, and was unwillingly detained nearly half an hour longer, to hear from Jemima accounts of gay parties which she had been at, and fine men with whom she had danced.

"And do you know," cried she, affectedly lowering her voice, "that we have seen a good deal of poor Lord Ennerdale? He comes to our house frequently, and has even dined with us, I believe, twice. He is not in very good spirits, you will easily believe, but I don't know whether the shade of depression upon his countenance does not, on the whole, render him more interesting than ever. He sees I feel for him, and we are the best friends in the world. I know that this would be a forbidden subject down stairs; but I thought, that whilst we were by ourselves, you would like to hear something about him. He does not, I suppose, poor soul! venture to write to you?"

Jemima, skilled beyond compare in knowing how

> To lend a lye the confidence of truth;
> T'explore a secret with insidious art,
> Watch a weak hour, and ransack all the heart,

now paused, and coolly, but circumspectly marked the fluctuations of Adela's colour, and anticipated from the agitation in which she beheld her, an unreserved, and almost involuntary communication of all that respected the present state of her affairs. But Adela, though she looked a thousand ways during this speech to avoid meeting the eyes of her who uttered it, and though it at once pained and disconcerted her in the highest degree, had yet infinitely too much experience of her cousin's character to be betrayed into uttering any confessions of which she might make a dangerous use. Perceiving that her drift had, in some measure, failed, yet convinced that she had inflicted upon Adela an acute sensation of jealousy, Jemima, presently after administering so pleasant an opiate, entreated her

no longer to deprive herself of rest; shook her by the hand, and suffered her, silent and dismayed, to retire.

CHAP. IX.

RECTITUDE.

ADELA had been unwilling to acknowledge it even to her own heart, but certain it is, that she had now, for many days, felt much disquietude at the punctilious silence which Lord Ennerdale persevered in maintaining. It was true that she had given no encouragement to his wish of writing; it is also true that she fancied herself nearly determined never to answer him. Yet, that he should wholly abstain from trying the effect even of *one* short letter; that he should appear to associate with no family so intimately as that of the artful and insinuating Jemima, inflicted upon her a pang, the keenest she had ever endured.

Distrust of those whom she esteemed and loved was not easily excited in her generous

mind; but of Jemima she knew the subtlety to be such, as to justify the strongest apprehensions; of Lord Ennerdale's firmness to withstand her lures, she could only form an estimate by his conduct towards herself: and that now, seemed neglectful and indifferent.

"Can an honourable, an undissembling nature," cried she, "be so wavering in faith? so vulnerable to flattery? I had almost said to seduction? Is this the requital my frank and grateful acceptance of his heart deserved? Is it for so versatile an object I thus suffer and repine?—Oh, that I could as easily erase his image from my memory, as mine, by this short absence, appears to have been blotted from his own! The vain boastings of an ambitious girl I might have discredited—but this determined silence, Lord Ennerdale, condemns you more strongly than the depositions of a host of informants!"

Yet, in mitigation of the distress these reflections excited, one idea presented itself to the mind of Adela, upon which she found it most soothing to repose. In a letter which she had the day before received

from Mrs. Somerville, it was expressly stated, that since that lady's departure from London, the Earl had written to her twice. This, it is very true, was not precisely like having written to Adela herself—yet, it was better than not writing at all; and she was too willing to regain even the smallest portion of the tranquillity which Jemima had disturbed, not to cling to this or any other prop, however feeble, that would preserve her from despondency.

It could be no matter of surprise to her, after the species of assignation she had overheard between her brother and the fair stranger the preceding evening, that he should spend the greatest part of the following day from home. Mr. Cleveland attributed his absence to the known dislike which he entertained against Barbara, and what he termed, her inhuman powers of execution. It was a day devoted wholly (after Jemima's departure, which took place as soon as breakfast concluded) to hard musical practice. Mr. Cleveland sat by as auditor and judge of his daughter's and his niece's success in their several attempts; the one, tractable from principle, and diligently doing

her best from a wish to give him pleasure; and the other, delighted at her own importance, and proud of being deemed competent to perform the part of an instructress.

Late in the evening, a truce to these exertions was obliged to be proclaimed, in consequence of the arrival of company, one individual amongst whom, an exceedingly deaf old gentleman (the same who had sat next to Adela at the first dinner party where she had met Lord Ennerdale) always looked so unhappy when music was going forward, that, in compassion to his feelings, Mr. Cleveland forbore proposing it.

Julius returned during the happy interregnum, and declared, that the house was so unexpectedly exempt from the shrill sound of female voices by which he had expected to be greeted, that he was on the point of proceeding to the next habitation, conceiving that he had made some mistake, and stopped at a mansion which he had no right to enter.

When she was retiring to her own room at night, it was with some surprise that Adela found waiting for her in the corridor leading towards it, her faithful Amy, with

a face full of business, and the most evident impatience to communicate to her some important piece of news.

"I should be frightened, Amy, at finding you here before I had rung," said Adela, "if your countenance did not assure me that you have nothing unpleasant to announce."

Amy smirked, and twinkled her dark eyes, but forbore to speak till her mistress and herself had both entered the bed-room, and she had carefully shut the door. Then drawing from her bosom a sealed letter, she mysteriously presented it to Adela, saying—

"There, dear missy, that's what me have got for you!"

Adela hastily, and with a beating heart, looked at it—but the hand-writing and the seal being both unknown to her, her spirits sunk, and in a tone of disappointment, she said—

"Who is it from, Amy? How came you by it?—I hate such an appearance of secresy!"

"Ah, well, never mind, dear missy—read it for all that! Very pretty young woman

give it me in the dusk this evening at the garden gate, and beg me so hard, oh, so hard to let you have it safe! She no say it come from any lover; but yet," added the good creature, nodding facetiously, " but yet me *do* believe there is little bit of love in it!"

Adela had by this time, after turning and examining the letter in every possible direction, taken courage, and broken the seal. The envelope was blank, the letter within it was from Lord Ennerdale.

" Aha! dear missy," exclaimed the observant Amy, delighted at the blushing start, the sparkling look of pleasure, which proved that her mistress had made some grateful discovery, " You no sorry me took the letter now!—You no hate secresy now! Me be sure it was no bad secresy, because the pretty young woman look so modest and so good."

This little harangue was wholly lost upon Adela, deeply ingrossed in perusing her precious manuscript. Its contents not only perfectly re-assured her as to its writer's undiminished affection, but dissipated all dejection from her mind, and left her placid,

re-animated, and full of confidence in his sincerity.

No clue, however, appeared in any part of the letter by which she could account for the unusual mode of its conveyance. The Earl only stated that he was writing at the house of a friend some way out of London, but should depart again in the course of the evening, and besought her, if (in compliance with his entreaties) she indulged him with an answer to direct it to him in town, and commit it without scruple to the post.

Dismissing Amy sooner than was her accustomed practice, Adela determined to begin her reply to this dispatch that very night. Her time during the day was so little at her own disposal, that she was glad to avail herself of any uninterrupted moment which she could command. Again she read the Earl's letter, previous to concluding her own; and some passages in it, lightly passed over on a first perusal, now struck her in a sense that filled her with astonishment. They seemed to intimate a hope that at no very distant period she might be induced to relax from the firmness

of her overstrained obedience to parental authority; and they touched, cautiously, but intelligibly, upon the possibility of convincing her that a private union would not only be practicable, but pardonable.

After some minutes spent in painfully ruminating upon the tendency of these insinuations, Adela snatched up her pen, and wrote thus:—

"I have a second time read your letter. "It seems no longer the same. From its "first perusal I derived nothing but peace "and consolation; it now fills me with dis-"quiet and suspicion. Pray write to me "no more in a strain that so fully con-"vinces me, it is your deliberate purpose "gradually to lure me on to confound right "with wrong. You have too plainly prov-"ed to me, how reasonable was the unwil-"lingness which I originally felt to permit "this correspondence, and how entirely my "perseverance in the path of duty which I "have traced out for myself, depends on my "resolving, (with honest distrust of my "own firmness) to avoid rather than to "court temptation. Let me often hear "from you through the medium of my sis-

" ter Somerville; but unless you can en-
" gage scrupulously to forbear touching
" upon such topics as you have now chosen,
" suffer the letter which I have just been
" reading, to be the only one I shall receive
" from yourself.

" Perhaps you will accuse me of harsh-
" ness; if I merit the imputation, forgive
" me—if I have inflicted upon you pain, I
" shall find it hard to forgive myself. But
" in the predicament in which I am placed,
" it is no easy task to reconcile the duty
" that I owe to my father, with the senti-
" ments of kindness which I feel, and am
" anxious to express, for you. To suppress
" these sentiments, and to substitute such
" peremptory language in their stead, costs
" me so severe an effort, that far from har-
" bouring against me any displeasure, you
" should, in strict justice, think of me only
" with feelings of concern."

Having thus, at whatever expence to her heart, obeyed the stern dictates of principle, Adela, surprised at the lateness of the hour, betook herself to rest; and in the morning committing her letter to the care of Amy,

strictly charged her to put it into the post herself.

The return of another day brought with it a summons for the renewal of all her musical labours; and whilst deeply engaged in them with her singing associate, they were both startled, as well as Mr. Cleveland, by the abrupt entrance, through an open window, of a small, but heavy parcel, which, in its decent to the floor, made so loud a noise, that it drew from each of the party an ejaculation of thankfulness at having escaped receiving from it any blow.

On examination, it proved to be a formal petition, tied round a large pebble, and signed, by a number of uncouth names, in the form of a *round robin.* Adela was desired to read it aloud, and found that it ran thus:

"To Augustus Cleveland, Esq. M. P. the humble petition of the distracted scholars of the neighbouring charity-school;

"Humbly sheweth,

"That your Honour's poor petitioners cannot but profess themselves sorely aggrieved in consequence of the daily interruption

given to their school business by the incessant loud singing kept up at your Honour's mansion; which said loud singing, contributes to their annoyance in sundry ways, too numerous to be here specified. When the wind blows from the South-west, it overpowers the sound of their breakfast-bell, and sends them fasting to their forms. It renders vain all their efforts to make themselves distinctly heard by their Master, when called up to repeat their lessons; and your Honour's Petitioners have been flogged, more than once, for mistakes they never committed—or, which having committed, ought solely to be charged to your Honour's account, and punished upon your Honour's person, accordingly.

"That your Honour's Petitioners, nevertheless, acknowledging that they have no further right to interfere with your Honour's family recreations, than as they may be a nuisance to themselves, do hereby only mean, humbly to supplicate, that your Honour would cause your windows to be shut whenever the wind, however gently, blows from the aforesaid South-west, and

especially during your poor Petitioners' school-hours:

"And your Honour's Petitioners will hold themselves for ever bound, &c. &c."

Julius, strongly suspected by the whole party of being the fabricator of this ludicrous remonstrance, entered whilst it was reading, and instantly sustained an attack, which had he been guilty, it would have been difficult to parry. But though incited to hearty laughter, he positively declared himself innocent, and pleaded utter ignorance of the author of so witty a performance.

Mr. Cleveland then desired that it might be no more mentioned, and called the two young ladies to the resumption of the employment which had been so impertinently interrupted.

But happily for the, now, thoroughly fatigued Adela, a suspension of longer duration was procured for her the next day, by the interference of her partial admirer—Lord Rothbury. A splendid Review was to take place upon ——— Common, at no very considerable distance from Rich-

mond; and his lordship, finding that Mr. Cleveland did not purpose to be present at it, entreated him to confide his daughter and his niece to the care of himself and his guest, Mrs. Monthermer, the lady, who, with her invalid son, had dined with the Cleveland family a short time before, at his house.

The proposal, after some demur, was accepted; a circumstance at which Adela had a double motive to rejoice; she had never been at a review—and it released her, for some hours, from the piano-forte.

Mrs. Monthermer, the two young ladies, and Lord Rothbury, occupied an open barouche. Julius and Major Monthermer accompanied them on horseback.

Amongst the carriages stationed on the ground before their arrival, was one of a very elegant construction, containing a party of ladies, in the youngest of whom Adela thought she discerned some resemblance to her incognita friend of the boat. But it was in figure only that she could trace this likeness. The stranger's face (had she even been familiar with it) could not at so great a distance be accurately dis-

tinguished. The expedition, however, with which she saw her brother ride up to this carriage, the instant he perceived it, immediately put the matter out of doubt.

She called the attention of Lord Rothbury to the party, and asked if he was acquainted with any of the ladies of whom it was composed.

"The vehicle they occupy," replied he, "I know perfectly, but its mistress is not in it. Her name is Elmer. She is our neighbour for a few weeks, having lately hired one of the best houses on the banks of the river; and, I believe, that her sole study is to fill it with a succession of the gayest visitors. The ladies you now see, are, doubtless, of the number."

Soon after this, Julius galloped back to the barouche, and delivered to his sister a slip of paper, on which was written, with a pencil:—

"How did my *round robin* prosper?
"Did you not do me the justice to recog-
"nize in it the friendly hand of your grate-
"ful moon-light companion?"

Adela wrote on the reverse of this—

"The success of the *round robin*, like

"my interview with its kind projector, "was too transient to afford me permanent "advantage: but I thank her sincerely "for the effort which she made, though it "was one that came in 'such a question-"able shape,' that some of our heads were "in danger of being broken by it."

She gave these lines to Julius, who having conveyed them to their destined proprietor, presently returned, bringing her the following answer:—

"My next exploit shall be better con-"ducted. I was obliged to entrust the "execution of the last to an assistant, "who, I fear, proved somewhat clumsy "and inexpert; but you must allow, that "in itself, 'the plot was a good plot—an "excellent plot.' My aim, however, was "to discountenance a mania, not to frac-"ture a skull. Had *yours* been injured, "your luckless champion would have "deemed no punishment adequate to the "perpetration of so much mischief."

Here ended the epistolary intercourse of the two ladies. A sudden shower of rain, drove nearly the whole assemblage of female spectators from the ground, and

amongst the rest, the incognita, and her friends.

Lord Rothbury's carriage was easily converted into a covered vehicle, and when the servants had completed the operation, their master sent to desire that Major Monthermer would come and take a seat within it, and not expose himself to the danger of getting wet. Julius received a similar invitation; which, with a laugh, he declined; and putting spurs to his horse, reached the villa long before any of the party.

A new trial here awaited Adela; but it was one in which the affections of her heart were so much called forth, that it wore none of the wearisome characteristics attached to her late musical persecution.

Her father, whilst out riding during their absence, had been seized with a giddiness in his head, which had caused him to drop suddenly from his horse. He was taken up by his groom, and an assisting labourer who happened to be passing, and conveyed insensible, but not severely injured, to the nearest house. There he had been blooded, and some time afterwards, was

gently removed in his own carriage, to the villa.

At the time when Julius reached home, nothing of this accident was known amongst the domestics, and he proceeded without suspicion to his own apartment, to change his dripping garments.

But on poor Adela's alighting, the first object she beheld in the hall, was her father, pale and faint, resting on two servants, and slowly crossing it to reach his own study.

The trembling agitation with which she sprung forward at this sight—the tender and unaffected alarm her countenance displayed, appeared to touch Mr. Cleveland, and drew from him assurances that he felt himself already considerably better, and hoped, after a little rest, to be perfectly restored.

But his predictions were longer in verifying than the sanguine wishes of Adela had led her to expect. During nearly a fortnight, her father was confined to his room; and even when he left it, a languor and feebleness still hung about him, that seemed to bid defiance to the most expe-

rienced professional skill, and resisted alike the salutary effects of air, exercise, medicine, or cheerful society.

The fortitude that enabled him to bear, with manly composure, the beginning of the seizure, was not proof against its lingering continuance. He grew hourly more fretful and impatient. Adela was his constant and indefatigable attendant; yet, though miserable or irritated if he missed her an instant, nothing that she did, nothing that she even proposed, appeared to yield him any gratification. Harassing as such unconquerable petulance might sometimes be to her spirits, if any circumstance could soften it, it was the conviction which her excellent understanding gave her, that in despite of it all, she was, in fact, becoming (imperceptibly even to himself) an object of greater interest to him every day. He would acknowledge no pleasure in receiving her attentions: but the attentions of any other were not even permitted.

At her, if he never smiled—at every one else he decidedly frowned. His eye anxiously followed her;—his ear, whenever she was absent, listened for her returning foot-

steps—and though he seemed to disdain whatever she suggested, he did nothing without requiring her opinion. From these symptoms, ungracious as they were, she extracted hope sufficient to support her with courage through her task, and to flatter her, that as his health amended, she might reasonably look forward to amended days—days when she should not merely be tolerated, but loved. She sought not the meed of gratitude for her services; they were her father's right, and her own first and most indispensable duty; yet, if they could awaken affection, how richly would they be repaid!

Julius, who at the beginning of Mr. Cleveland's illness, had shewn a solicitude nearly as great as her own, and abstained from almost ever quitting the house, finding that not only his convalescence was slow, but that Adela was obviously a more important personage in the sick room than himself, gradually relaxed in his assiduities, and soon left to her nearly the whole weight of attendance. "You are defrauding me," he laughingly observed to her, "of all the hard-earned laurels I won, in the character

of a nurse, when my father was ill at Bath. He grumbles at you—but he prefers you to any body about him. I shall consign him, therefore, to your care, and since you have succeeded in routing me from the field, have only to hope, that you will triumph with moderation, and that the first favour which I have to solicit, you will generously aid me with your interest in obtaining."

CHAP. X.

CONFLAGRATION.

WHILST thus meritoriously devoting herself to almost perpetual assiduity in her father's room, Adela was at once gratified, perplexed and amazed, at the pertinacious continuance of Lord Ennerdale's correspondence. How his letters gained access to her toilet table, she was unable to form the most distant conjecture. Amy had received instructions to refuse undertaking their conveyance, and Amy, who was truth itself, solemnly protested that she had

(however unwillingly) obeyed the rigorous decree. Amongst the other domestics, it was unpleasant to set on foot inquiries, which, perhaps, would but serve to publish to *all*, what was now known only to a few, that is, her having any private correspondent whatever. She was better satisfied, therefore, to rest in uncertainty.

Yet the letters themselves, by whomsoever deposited, constituted infinitely her greatest objects of tribulation. Ignorant of Mr. Cleveland's illness, Lord Ennerdale desisted not from pleading, in the most impassioned language, the cause which he had touched upon (though in a manner so much more guarded) at the opening of the correspondence; and Adela, shocked by his urgency at a time when her best feelings as a daughter were all called forth, thought of his arguments with unfeigned condemnation, and with hourly increasing conviction of their fallacy. Was this a period to talk to her of deserting her post? Was this a moment to discuss any projects of abandoning her father?

Yet exhortations of such a nature, continually reiterated, and proceeding from

one whom she so truly loved, were calculated, she feared, to be but too dangerous to her principles, and too alluring to her imagination. Every time Mr. Cleveland spoke to her with harshness—every time he looked at her with unkindness—was quick to take offence, and hard to appease; these tormenting letters, whatever she did to drive them from her mind, imperiously recurred to it. They haunted her in her dreams, they pursued her through the day; "and," as she wrote to Lord Ennerdale, "robbed her of power to snatch from any "of the alleviating circumstances her si-"tuation occasionally presented, the com-"fort she should otherwise have derived "from them. The height of happiness "he vainly proposed to her, took from "all blessings else, their value and their "charm." She concluded by affirming, that, at so ill-timed a moment, it was really cruel to expose her to such conflicts; besought him generously to forbear writing again; or, should he still persist, bade him be prepared to find his letters returned in a blank cover—unopened!

This was a threat which she scarcely be-

lieved herself capable of fulfilling; but which, at all events, might produce a change in his style of writing, essentially beneficial to her peace.

Mr. Cleveland was now sufficiently recovered to take exercise in the garden, and to walk about the house without requiring support. A few days after Adela had dispatched her last decisive answer to the Earl, whilst she sat at work in one of the ground-floor rooms, and Julius was reading to her some ridiculous story in the newspaper, their father, who had gone up stairs to prepare for his first airing, suddenly rejoined them with a countenance much ruffled, and holding in his hand an unopened letter.

He extended it to his daughter as he approached, saying, in a tone of sharp interrogation—"Who is this from?"

All the blood in her veins seemed to rush into her cheeks, at this unexpected interrogation, and trembling as she glanced her eye towards the direction, it was some consolation to her to perceive that it was written in a hand wholly new to her. Yet, she but too readily conjectured the quar-

ter whence it came, and faintly answered—

"I do not know, Sir."

"Open it, then," resumed her father sternly.

She did so, as well as her shaking hands would enable her, and without surprise, though with the deepest consternation, found all her apprehensions realized, and saw, once more, the well-known characters of Lord Ennerdale.

Speechless, and changing colour every moment, she had no courage to look up, and the letter dropped from her hand to the floor—

"Again I ask you, who is it from?" imperiously resumed Mr. Cleveland.

She faltered, her lips quivered—yet, distressed as she was, she tremulously, but, without equivocation, answered—

"It is, sir, from—Lord Ennerdale."

"And this," indignantly observed he, "this you suffer in defiance of my known disapprobation? This you have neither the decency nor the honour to forbear permitting under my very roof? A clandestine correspondence carried on by *any*

young woman with a suitor her family rejects, is censurable and disgraceful: in *you* such a breach of propriety is a flagrant act of ingratitude and depravity! Who is it that you are thus encouraging? Not merely one whom I have commanded you to renounce, but the direst foe of your best and most disinterested friend—the very man who once sought to destroy your brother!"

Then, pausing a moment, and alternately surveying the prostrate epistle, and his offending daughter, he presently, in a tone of sarcasm, added—

"These respectable missives, I presume, have been frequent? Do you receive them daily?"

"No indeed, sir," in a low voice, replied the mortified Adela.

"At all events, their number, probably, is pretty considerable! Now, Adela," continued he, with great severity, "hear me attentively. I, at this moment, renew, and more absolutely than ever enforce, my prohibition of Lord Ennerdale's addresses. I forbid you, on pain of my irreconcileable displeasure, to hold any species of commu-

nication with him. I command you to destroy, in my presence, all his former letters, and to return the one just received (unread) in a blank cover."

This last proposal, was not so wholly new to her imagination as to be utterly insupportable; but the order to destroy every vestige of a correspondence so precious though so trying to her feelings, wrung her heart with anguish. She looked up at her father with an air of timid intercession, which was answered, however, only by a frowning reiteration of his commands, and rising slowly to go in search of the devoted packet, he detained her to add—

"Assure me, on your solemn word of honour, that to whatever number these letters may amount, you will bring them all!"

Scarcely able to speak, she indistinctly murmured forth a sighing—"I will, sir," and was suffered to proceed.

What passed in her mind as she ascended to her room, as she drew from her escrutoir the proscribed letters, and lingering over them, pressed them, as if to take a last farewell, to her heart and to her lips, it

would be vain to attempt describing. She heard herself impatiently called, ere she could bear to terminate this sorrowing delay, and re-entered her father's presence with the pale and reluctant aspect of one about to sacrifice the dearest possession of her heart.

Mr. Cleveland met her at the door, and seeing that the letters (for which he eagerly looked) were in her hand, he bade her open and throw them beneath the grate. Then ringing for a lighted taper, he put it in her trembling grasp, and ordering her to set fire to them herself, insisted upon her standing by to see them consumed.

A sigh, almost amounting to a groan, escaped her! For the first time since this scene had begun, a sensation of anger mingled itself with the bitterness of her regret. Yet, she had too much forbearance or too much pride to utter any useless supplications; she even commanded her tears, and applying the flame to the quickly-kindling papers, stood with a sort of torpid dismay, to witness their rapid conflagration.

When it was completed; "you may wish perhaps," said Mr. Cleveland, "to know how, and where, I intercepted the letter, which still remains. One of the inferior female domestics, probably bribed by your honourable lover, was endeavouring as I passed your room in the way to my own, to insinuate it under your door, which she had vainly attempted to open. I compelled her to surrender it—and this very day she will be dismissed from my service. Are these circumstances to do credit to a young lady's reputation?—Are they risks which it is generous to expose an ignorant servant to incur?—Have you no compunction for the mischief you have brought upon her?—the necessary severity you have forced me to exert?"

"I have, at least, great and sincere sorrow for it!" cried Adela, earnestly, and almost forgetting, in this poor girl's cause, her own disturbance. "Is it quite forbidden me to speak in her behalf?—Quite impossible to procure her pardon? Ah, surely," she mentally added, "I have amply purchased the right to obtain it!"

"Dismiss the shadow of such a hope from your mind! Her sentence is irrevocable. There is no servant in the house whom I would not discard for a similar offence! Be thankful that your own Amy is not the detected trespasser. But why is your door kept locked?"

Adela, to prevent the secret introduction of any future letters, had recently charged Amy never to quit her apartment without securing it from intruders, and had no means of entering it herself but by a previous application to her attendant for the key. She was unwilling, however, to make an avowal so little calculated to gain belief, and suffered her father to conclude that the circumstance was accidental.

He now called upon her to terminate the whole affair, by placing in an envelope, sealing, and directing under his own eye, the letter which he had sentenced her to return unopened. When, with a heavy heart, she had concluded this operation, the carriage in which he purposed taking an airring, was announced. He immediately put the newly-inclosed dispatch in his pocket, called for his hat, and quitted the room.

Julius had been a silent auditor (not spectator) of this whole transaction. Nearly from its commencement, he had concealed his face upon his arms as they rested on a table, and not once did he look up, till hearing Mr. Cleveland shut the door, he arose, took his sister affectionately in his arms, and said with great emotion, "Adela, my dearest Adela, you have the temper of an angel!"

The unexpected kindness of this address quite overpowered her, and she wept upon his shoulder like an infant. Tears started to his own eyes, and for some moments they were equally unable to speak:

"My sweet sister," cried he, at length, "take comfort!"—Such unconditional submission, such unexampled gentleness, must force its way to the sternest bosom! Adela, forgive my passiveness, my apparently heartless passiveness, throughout this odious scene! I have interfered, many a time, upon points infinitely less material; but, on *this* occasion, I had no power to step forward. Yet, believe me, I felt for you most keenly! I could no more bear to see lasting sorrow inflicted upon you, than I could en-

dure to suffer it myself. Trust to time, and your own meritorious conduct for the restoration of your happiness; and in me, dearest girl, fatal to it as I have hitherto been, behold, henceforward, only a true friend."

"My kind Julius," cried Adela, "in what other light, on many of the most important occurrences of my life, have I ever had reason to consider you? I have no words to tell you how gratefully I prize such a friend—nor how consolatory it has often been to me, to find in your looks so much sympathy and affection. But, Julius, what can be done for the poor young woman, whose dismission I have so unintentionally caused?"

"Hang her, an awkward d—l!" exclaimed he, "what business had she to fancy herself qualified for the part of an intriguing chambermaid? Her blundering clumsiness has occasioned all the disasters of the morning. The best thing which we can do for her, is to expedite her departure, that she may avoid the reproaches she so justly merits; and, at the same time, let us devoutly hope she will send none of her own

stupid race to apply for the post she vacates."

But notwithstanding the pretended harshness of this speech, he threw into his sister's lap two or three guineas to send to the discarded damsel by Amy, and bidding her farewell till dinner-time, marched off.

Adela, since her residence with her father, had received a considerable increase of allowance; and now, more than doubling the sum which Julius had left in her hands, she hastened to make Amy the distributer of their joint liberality.

Mr. Cleveland, on his return home, addressed his daughter, and in all respects behaved to her as if the affair of the morning had never occurred. His nephew Talbot arrived in the evening to take up his abode at the villa (as was now frequently the case) for some days. Adela and Julius welcomed such an inmate, at the present juncture, with more than usual pleasure; and the hospitable reception he obtained from all parties, gave an animation to his looks, and imparted a delusive joy to his heart, which he scarcely knew how to dissemble.

Talbot, with a fervour far surpassing friendship, had loved Adela almost from a child. Yet accustomed to the exercise of the steadiest self-command, and aware of all the difficulties lying before him, he had, with unexampled circumspection, succeeded in disguising from every eye, but that of the keen-sighted Jemima, the symptoms of his attachment: and forming no plan, though nourishing a thousand alternate hopes and fears, he had quietly watched the progress of events, and, whether adverse or propitious, trusted wholly to them the decision of his fate.

Lord Ennerdale's pretensions, and the repulse which they had encountered, were equally well known to him. He now beheld Adela disengaged, and exempt, if not from all attachment, at least from all solicitation. No favoured successor had stepped forward to replace the Earl; and, removed from the public eye, she was here an object neither of pursuit nor observation. The brilliant visions which her noble lover's persevering assiduities might have led her to indulge, would, in this retirement, have leisure to fade and disappear; and though

Talbot had no means of judging of the exact state of her present feelings, yet, from the general placidity of her demeanour, he thought there was reason to hope, that her obedience to Mr. Cleveland's will was unattended by any of that extreme wretchedness which would make it presumptuous in him to declare his sentiments.

In adopting this opinion, he reflected not, that in many cases it might be wise to judge of others by himself. His character had in it nothing artificial; yet no man was more successful in concealing from those around him, the mental conflicts he sustained—the fluctuations between joy and despondency, doubt and confidence, which succeeded each other in his mind. Adela possessed the same power in a yet more eminent degree. She deemed it weak, if not disgraceful, to let every casual observer read in her countenance the sorrow of disappointed love; and she thought it culpable not to repress in private as well as public, the encroachments of discontent. Mumurs which she dared not vent before Mr. Cleveland, she struggled to subdue when alone. She perpetually endeavoured to bear in mind, how

little right she had to "condition about events;"—how much it was her duty to weigh the good with the evil, and how probable it was, that when both were fairly estimated, the good (in her own case as in so many others) would be found to preponderate. The reconciliation with her father, assuredly was a blessing of which his rejection of Lord Ennerdale ought not to render her insensible; and the increasing kindness of her brother, was a source of happiness which she needed still less effort to value as it deserved. But, that from all this, resulted perfect indifference to what she had lost—complete forgetfulness of avowed affection, or total renunciation of every lurking hope, it were vain to assert. Her resignation was unmixed with apathy; her composure originated in no disposition to change, or even to waver.

Talbot had sounded his father's present sentiments upon the subject of the declaration which he meditated; and had joyfully discovered, that many of the objections which would heretofore have been made to his choice, were by the alteration in Adela's circumstances, now done away.

The General, indeed, would have wished his son, in marrying, to have aimed at giving new consequence to himself and his family, by the extension of his connexions, and the enlargement of his influence, amongst people of opulence and power. Yet, indolent, and not hard of heart, he thought that it was scarcely worth while to refuse his consent to a match which (though inferior to his own views of ambition) would constitute Talbot's felicity, and now presented on the score either of fortune or birth, nothing to which he could reasonably object. Already partial to his niece, he therefore finally concluded, that the best and least troublesome mode of proceeding, would be to receive her cheerfully as his daughter, on condition that she should obtain, from the well-stored coffers of Mr. Cleveland, a portion equal to that which he had bestowed upon her two sisters.

Thus authorised, Talbot began his operations, by an unreserved disclosure to Julius of the purport of his visit:

"I will make no application," cried he, "to your father, till I have had some con-

ference with Adela—and if she rejects, or bids me delay my suit, I will depart, without giving him reason to surmise the motive which brought me."

"Then, my good fellow," bluntly, but kindly replied Julius, "keep your walking-staff at hand to depart, whenever it suits you, as unsatisfied as you came! In your life you never sallied forth on a more bootless errand! Adela is as much devoted to Ennerdale as ever—and my father, to be honest with you, if he disturbs her projects of faith and constancy by proposing any other man, has an object in his eye, whose pretensions will form as insuperable a bar to yours, as those of Ennerdale himself."

Talbot, much alarmed, besought him to be more explicit.

"I assure you," resumed Julius, "you are only urging me to give you the heart-ache! Adela is a dear and admirable creature, and I can easily believe that any man who loves her as she ought to be loved, must suffer severely when convinced that he has nothing to hope. We have," con-

tinued he, "a confounded old neighbour, Lord Rothbury, I mean—a worthy soul, too, in the main; but, unfortunately, he has a nephew, or a tenth cousin, now on a visit to him, whom he designs for his heir, and for whom he wishes much to negociate a match with my sister. The good girl suspects nothing of the matter; but preliminaries have been discussed by the two elders; and I every day expect to hear the business gravely announced to her, and to see the finishing stroke given to all her expectations of being allowed to enjoy, undisturbed, her present ample measure of tribulation."

Here evaporated without a prospect of renewal, all Talbot's ideal felicity, and the diffidence which he had so recently shaken off, resumed its accustomed place in his mind, accompanied by the keenest regret at the aggravated inquietude which he found was preparing for the object of his attachment.

"And have you," cried he, "whose influence was so great when the rejection of Lord Ennerdale was in question, no ascen-

dancy over your father on the present occasion?—Will you do every thing for the gratification of what ought to have been an obsolete and exploded prejudice, and nothing for the preservation of Adela's peace of mind?"

"You are talking, honest friend, of what you do not at all understand! I exerted not the smallest influence in the affair of Ennerdale's dismission. I was out of town at the time, and wholly unsuspicious of what was passing. Yet, I do not deny, that my father thought he was acting in conformity to my wishes, and smothered his ambition chiefly to avoid giving any shock to my vindictive humour. On this very account, I feel the less confidence of success in undertaking to counteract his present scheme. He may choose to tell me, that the sacrifice which he made to my fastidiousness of *one* titled son-in-law, is enough: and the reversionary prospects of this new pretender, he will probably be so far from disdaining, that they may appear to him desirable indemnifications for the honours in possession which he so magnanimously declined. Another thing, my dear Talbot, I will

frankly confide to your discretion. My own concerns, just at this time, are in so ticklish a position; the credit which you think I might exert for Adela, I may perhaps so soon be taught to find insufficient for myself, that I foresee a much greater probability of *requiring*, than of being in any predicament to *perform* the good offices of an interposing friend."

He then entered into a detailed explanation of the difficulties that encompassed him, which filled his attentive auditor with amazement and concern. Having ended the strange narration, and listened with unusual patience to all Talbot's grave but friendly representations, he thus terminated the conversation:—

"I have carved out my own perplexities, and furnished the materials myself for the pile of embarrassment, doubt, and anxiety, which I must now either craftily undermine, or batter down in the open face of day! The consciousness of having been the architect of so intricate a structure, by no means increases for it my veneration! and every impediment to its demolition which may be opposed to my efforts, will

heighten my regret for having ever reared it. We thoughtlessly, or rather unconsciously, 'weave the warp, and weave the woof' of our own destiny; but, in discovering the fatal misapplication of our industry, the stings of self-reproach constitute, perhaps, the severest portion of our wretchedness. How I shall weather the storm which I first rashly excited, and then, yet more rashly, exposed myself to struggle against, it is not for one so dim-sighted into futurity, to decide. I have energy, however, though but little prudence; and a sanguine spirit, though now, at times, a somewhat timorous imagination. If I fail, Talbot!—But avaunt with such gloomy, such hateful forebodings!—Give me your good wishes, my dear fellow;—if I demand them, give me even your services, and above all, be trusty and be secret."

CHAP. XI.

TUTORING.

Some time elapsed after the destruction of Lord Ennerdale's letters, before Adela received intelligence of him through any channel whatever, or was even enabled to form a conjecture how he had borne the contemptuous restitution which she had menaced, and then been compelled to make.

At length a letter arrived from Mrs. Somerville, the contents of which inflicted upon her the most piercing uneasiness.

"It would be cruel," said the considerate Elinor, "to reproach you, my loved sister, "for an act which we are all convinced "you performed *by authority*—authority "not to be disputed. How Lord Ennerdale obtained his information, he refuses "to explain: but he seems well acquainted "with some recent transactions at your "villa, and submits with a better grace "than I expected to the mortifying treat-

"ment which his poor letter received. I "should tell you, that he had principally "written it to solicit your pardon for the "expressions which had given you such "dire offence in his preceding ones.

"He arrived at his frowning edifice in "our vicinity last night. Lady Isabella "and Mr. Annesley had travelled with "him; but he left them both to make the "best of their novel situation, and came to "us almost the instant he stepped from his "carriage.

"And now, Adela, let me ask you; have "you amongst your surrounding neigh-"bours, a Major Monthermer, related to, "and supposed to be the heir of Lord "Viscount Rothbury? How chances it, "my dear girl, that you have never men-"tioned him to me? Are the frightful "reports circulated respecting his views in "being so frequently your visitor, un-"known to you? Is it false that he is an "agreeable and a prepossessing man? Is "it equally false that he is a particular "favourite with my father, and that de-"signs, wholly subversive of our better "hopes, are entertained in his behalf? I

"tremble for you if these rumours are "true!—Yet, Adela, remember, for one "year, at least, your sacred word is pledged "to remain free! No threats, no terrors "ought to impel you to perjury. Plead "this promise, be firm in maintaining it; "and confound not the merit of submis- "sion to lawful commands, with the "weakness of consenting to become trea- "cherous, and to incur dishonour.

"All here are in the utmost anxiety "upon this truly alarming subject. Write "immediately. Suspense, which Lord "Ennerdale quotes high authority for as- "serting to be *the only insupportable mis-* "*fortune of life*, makes strange havoc "upon his spirits and his looks, and adds "not much, you will believe, to the sere- "nity of either Mr. Somerville or myself. "This last-named friend sends you his "most cordial love.—Adieu."

Adela still held this letter in her hand, and was painfully ruminating upon its purport, when she was joined in the garden, whither she had fled to read it, by the person to whom it principally related—Major Monthermer.

Hitherto his presence, though not precisely a matter of indifference to her (since she admired his manners and conversation, and felt inclined to approve all that she knew of his character), had never excited in her any other emotion than that of placid good-will. But with this letter, representing him in a point of view so undesired, still before her eyes, she could not now behold him without experiencing a degree of confusion which the most undiscerning observer must have perceived. It certainly escaped not the notice of her present companion; yet he abstained from making upon it any remark, and hastened to inform her, with some symptoms of risibility in his countenance, that he had been sent by Mr. Cleveland to communicate a project to her, which it was earnestly hoped she would sanction with her approbation.

"Your father," continued he, "has heard me accidentally mention, that during my residence in India, I gave some attention to, and made some progress in the study of the Persian language. Shall I now tell you, Miss Cleveland, what his proposal to

me has been, in consequence of this very undesigning avowal?"

Adela begged he would speak plainly, and he thus went on—

"I am required, if your consent can be obtained, to commence your instructor in this useful branch of female knowledge."

Laughing, but incredulous, Adela now replied—

"My father certainly meant this singular advantage for my cousin Barbara! He knows how superfluous it would be to offer it to me. I have neither inclination, memory, nor capacity, for any such undertaking."

"Yet assure yourself, that you are the person I was directed to address. Mr. Cleveland says he is too nervous at present to bear the sound of music, and therefore designs, that the time which you used to dedicate to that pursuit shall be now transferred to the acquirement of this novel accomplishment. I laugh," proceeded the Major, "but not so much at the thing itself, as at the surprise which I anticipated it would occasion you, and now perceive

that you feel. But, rather than hazard a remonstrance, agree to endure the transient torment of my lessons; I will not make them very serious or tedious evils; and there is reason to hope that the enthusiasm for Eastern learning, which instigated their being proposed, will speedily subside."

A disagreeable plan could scarcely have been set forth in less forbidding colours.—Adela felt and acknowledged herself obliged to the Major for seeking to palliate its irksomeness with such good-nature; and after some further discussion of the absurd proposal, suffered herself to be prevailed upon to accompany him into the house, and make known to her father that she was at least willing to *try* the new scheme.

But Major Monthermer, could she have read his heart, would not have appeared to her so wholly undesigning as he was desirous to be supposed.

It is true, the project he announced to her, and seemed to attach so little importance to, was originally suggested by her father; but the Major had been most ready to abet and encourage it, and secretly ex-

ulted in the opportunities of daily intercourse which it would give him with an object he so greatly admired, and to whose good opinion he was so solicitous to recommend himself.

Too much a man of the world to be of very enthusiastic feelings, Monthermer, generally speaking, dealt more in gay flattery to women than in fervent and sincere tenderness. Lord Rothbury wished him earnestly to marry; he had himself, originally, no wishes pointing in the same direction.—Having retained his freedom till the age of thirty-four, and been accustomed, alternately, to the bustle of a camp, the conviviality of male society, or the retirement of a man learned in classical as well as military knowledge, he saw no charms in the proposal of obtaining a companion for life, whom his habits and pursuits had left him so little leisure to deem essential to happiness. Rather than offend his noble kinsman, however, he endeavoured to manifest as little repugnance to the proposal as he could, and wisely strove to resign himself to inevitable necessity.

The information, after two or three in-

terviews with Adela, that *she* was the lady his relation had it in meditation to accomplish his union with, considerably altered the tone of his feelings, and facilitated his task of appearing perfectly acquiescent. She made a deeper impression upon his mind, and exalted more highly his estimation of the power of her sex to awaken esteem, and secure attachment, than any other female he had ever conversed with.

More in love than it was either quite pleasant to acknowledge, or quite easy to feel, he detached himself from the society of her who had caused this revolution as little as possible; evinced great anxiety to hear whether the negociation hinted at by Lord Rothbury was likely to prosper; and by unremitted assiduities, sought gradually to propitiate the fair enslaver, whom it was become so much his interest to court and serve.

The consternation of Talbot, on beholding the Major installed with such ease and promptness in his new office, could only be equalled by the surprise with which Julius learnt the readiness with which his sister had concurred in so preposterous an ar-

rangement: "Do you know," said he, with his usual impetuosity, "what you are about, Adela? Do you know that you are encouraging this man to fall in love with you, and giving him reason to suppose that you like it? In the De—l's name, what have you to do with his Persian pothooks, and his grammars and dictionaries, and pretended zeal for your instruction? Don't you see that it is all a concerted thing between him and my father, to bring you oftener together, and to accustom you by degrees to relish his assiduities?"

"Something of this kind I do indeed apprehend," frankly, though with much disturbance, replied Adela; "but not, my dear Julius, from the Major, who really seems to have no other view than to oblige my father; and, like myself, I believe, thinks that the scheme might well have been dispensed with. He has never, by word or look, given me reason to imagine he either wished to inspire, or himself entertained, any stronger regard for me than that of a social neighbour, and a general friend to the family."

"Fiddle-faddle, nonsense! What should

make him a general friend to the family? He has hardly known us a month, and certainly would be perfectly excusable, were he to hear, without caring three straws about the matter, that we were all to be hanged or drowned to-morrow!—all the *male* part of the household I mean. As for you, whether it be a matter of triumph or regret to you, I know not; but be assured, you are by no means an object of equal indifference to him. I therefore look upon it as one of the most reprehensible actions of your whole life, to have so quietly sanctioned the plan which has admitted him to such an established degree of intimacy in this house. I speak thus, upon the supposition that you have no design to accept him: the case is different if, on that point, your mind is at all in suspense."

"You so little believe in the probability of such a circumstance," cried Adela, greatly hurt by this intimation, "that to make any disclaiming professions, would only be unnecessarily losing time. But anxious as I am at once to conduct myself with integrity towards Major Monthermer,

and to escape the misery of incensing my father, you must acknowledge, dear Julius, that I have a most arduous part to perform."

"You must let honesty gain the ascendant over cowardice. All this temporizing is not only blameable, as it tends to mislead Monthermer, but as it manifestly threatens to be injurious to your own interests. Speak plainly to my father whilst it is yet time—tell him. . . . "

"I dare tell him nothing," interrupted Adela, "unless interrogated: and even then, such is my dread of losing the little (the *very* little) ground I have gained with him, that it would only be by an effort, of which you cannot estimate the difficulty, that I could bring myself to say any thing which he might disapprove."

Their conference was here interrupted, and soon after, Adela, with more than usual reluctance, was obliged to repair to her new language-master in Mr. Cleveland's study.

Though these lessons were considered by the politic Major as mere instruments to further his purpose of ingratiating himself

with his lovely pupil, yet, in the presence of her father, he affected to think them of some consequence, and seemed to be really interested in the success that might attend them. But the moment Mr. Cleveland left the room, and Mrs. Monthermer (who often accompanied her son) alone remained to interrupt their *tête-à-tête*, he threw off the pedagogue's mask, conversed most agreeably on every subject but the one which he came professedly to teach; or, producing some entertaining book, either French or English, read to her whilst she worked, and thought his pains richly requited, if he drew from her one smile, or succeeded in calling forth a single approving remark. Of smiles, indeed, she was in his presence far from being lavish. The remonstrances of Julius, and the warning sent to her by Mrs. Somerville, had put her on her guard; and circumstanced as she was, nothing appeared to her more desirable than to establish in the Major's opinion a firm persuasion that she was dull, tasteless, and disagreeable.

How well she succeeded in this humble

endeavour, a very short interval sufficed to ascertain.

Mr. Cleveland, using but little ceremony, and descending to the condescension of but little preparation, at length summoned her to a private conference, for the purpose of making known his *decision*, rather than his *wishes*, in Major Monthermer's favour. His style of expression, in general, was far from being remarkable for clearness; to be verbose in matters of business, and fatiguingly circuitous, seemed more his *forte*; but on the present occasion he was memorably concise and unambiguous.

"Adela," cried he, "it gives me pleasure to observe, that you appear to entertain no prejudice against the kinsman of our noble neighbour, Lord Rothbury. I have serious thoughts of accepting for you the proposals which, on the Major's behalf, his Lordship has thought proper to make to me; and I wish you henceforward to regard your agreeable preceptor in the light of a suitor whom I highly approve. He meditates, on some family

affairs, a short but indispensable excursion into Ireland. It is now the beginning of August: he will return in November, and before Christmas, I hope to see you his wife."

Heart-sick, and dismayed as she was by this speech, its extreme want of feeling, its abrupt, despotic coolness, inspired into the diffident Adela a spirit which she had despaired of being ever capable of exerting. She was silent a few minutes, still loth to provoke her father, though determined not entirely to desert her own cause; and then, in a voice which, at the same time that it trembled, she flattered herself was firm, answered—"I have put it out of my own power, Sir, even if I had the will, to accept the addresses at present of any man living—except one, whom I dare not name."

Betrayed by his first surprise into the indecency of uttering a tremendous oath, Mr. Cleveland then fiercely proceeded to demand what she meant.

"You are not privately married?' cried he.

"No, Sir; but I am solemnly bound by

an inviolable promise to decline, at least for the space of a year, every proposal."

This answer restored to him the power of breathing freely. Offensive to him as it was, what he had at first apprehended was so much worse, that, in the comparison, it dwindled into an evil of scarcely any magnitude. After a short pause—

"And upon what principle," cried he, sneeringly, "could you think yourself authorized, my moral and conscientious daughter, to contract so presumptuous an engagement? Do you imagine that children, whether minors or of full age, who reside with their parents—who are dependent upon them for their future dower, and indebted to them for present maintenance and protection—do you imagine, I say, that children so circumstanced, have any right to make these sort of compacts?"

"When I permitted myself to enter into the engagement of which you are speaking, Sir, I had *not* the happiness of residing witha parent."

"But I suppose it has often been confirmed in your letters since?"

"It required no confirmation, Sir; it

was ample and full, as originally pronounced."

A mutual silence now for some minutes ensued. Mr. Cleveland walked about the room with a brow gloomily overcast, and with strides, which, for a still-feeble convalescent, were singularly expeditious.—Adela stood leaning against the arm-chair in which she had been sitting, fearfully awaiting the result of his rumination.

" Since I find you," at length said he, " so scrupulous an observer of your word in one instance, I beg to lay claim to some share of the benefit attending this punctilious exactness. I require you, therefore, strictly to promise, that the Major's visits shall not be discouraged; that, on the contrary, he shall be received with the same civility as heretofore; and that neither previous to, nor at the expiration of the time appointed for holding my authority at defiance, you shall presume to renew the extraordinary engagement which now so indecorously binds you."

" I will do nothing, Sir, in direct violation of your commands. But may I be permitted to say, that the former part of

your injunction gives me great concern? On what footing am I expected still to receive the Major?"

Mr. Cleveland, who delighted in an opportunity of delivering a sentence dictatorially, now pompously answered—" You will receive him on the footing of an acquaintance whom your father highly values, and whose society he will hold you responsible for being obliged to relinquish."

Here was another instance of compendious perspicuity, with which Adela, had she been in a humour to admire the pithiness of laconic elocution, could not have failed to be enchanted; but her ear, just at present, had no sense of such beauties; she was listening more to the meaning than to the arrangement of her father's words; and that meaning proved so particularly unpalateable, that it drew from her only a sigh of regret.

Their short but mutually unsatisfactory dialogue here ended, and Mr. Cleveland exacting from her no reply to his last speech, left her to the unexhilarating employment of pacing up and down the room in nxious and almost desponding meditation.

The first interruption that was given to this musing disposition, the entrance of Major Monthermer occasioned.

"I come not," cried he, "to harass you with a summons to dry study, or even to its semblance: bnt my mother is going this morning to Strawberry Hill, and she sent me to entreat that you would accompany her."

A negative, polite but decided, was rising to Adela's lips, when the unexpected return of Mr. Cleveland, and his immediate acceptance for her of the proposed scheme, compelled her to say that she should be happy to go.

In crossing the hall, to run up and prepare for this excursion, she saw Talbot Cleveland and her brother just returning from an expedition on the water.

"My father," said she, stopping them a moment, "chooses that I should go with Mrs. Monthermer and her son to visit Strawberry Hill. I wish you would order your horses and join the party."

"I will do still more," cried Julius; "for if there is room, they shall give me a seat in their carriage—or rather, upon

second thoughts, they shall give one to you, Talbot. I like better that Adela should be seen with two beaux than with one; and in this case, it may be more politic to couple the Major with her cousin than with her brother."

Talbot proclaimed this to be an extremely happy thought, and Julius contrived, when the carriage containing Mrs. Monthermer stopped at the door, to accomplish its realization.

CHAP. XII.

AMBIGUITY.

CHAGRINED as she was at being under the necessity of continuing to receive such marked attention from the Major, Adela felt considerably gratified by the conviction that no absolute renunciation of her promise to Lord Ennerdale would be insisted upon. Glad also, that the indispensable avowal of this promise was passed—cheered by the beauty of one of the finest days she almost ever remembered—and en-

tertained, even in despite of herself, by the varied and animated conversation of Monthermer, her native vivacity seemed insensibly to revive, and charming as he had ever thought her, she now appeared to him more engaging than on any former occasion.

Amongst the innumerable objects of curiosity and admiration which the singular mansion they were visiting, presented, none more forcibly arrested the observation of Adela, than the extraordinary collection of rare and truly valuable portraits with which it is enriched. At every turn, some countenance met her eye with the name of whose original, either history, biography, or poetry, had rendered her familiar. That of Madame de Sévigné she would alone have deemed well worth a long pilgrimage to behold. That of Madame de Grignian, her daughter, was no further gratifying to her, than as she connected with it the remembrance of the charming mother; the expression of the face wholly disappointed her, and she felt half tempted to smile at the maternal partiality that had so often induced Madame de Sévigné, in her letters,

to extol to the skies the beauty of such an aspect! The sweet and touching Duchesse de la Valliere, so appropriately termed by her judicious cotemporary, *l'humble violette*; the imperious Madame de Montespan, who so largely partook of that playful but sarcastic turn of wit, peculiar to her family, and every where denominated, *l'esprit des Mortemars*; and amongst the portraits of individuals celebrated in our own country, the exquisitely beautiful head, painted by Rubens, of the Duke of Buckingham—that Buckingham, whose sudden and astonishing elevation under James I., was followed by so early and disastrous a death* in the reign of his unfortunate successor: —these, and a multitude of others, distinguished for genius, for wisdom, for grace, or for talents, awakened her enthusiasm, and gratified her understanding in a degree

* He was assassinated in his 36th year, by Felton, a lieutenant in the army. His son, the author of the Rehearsal, has been delineated, under the name of Zimri, in Dryden's Absalom and Achithophel; and Pope, in his Moral Essays, Epistle III. has drawn a most impressive picture of his obscure decease.

to which the pleasure of looking at snuff-boxes, china, old watches, and japan pomatum-pots, bore not the smallest proportion.

As they were passing from the gallery to the room called the Tribune, a new party of visitors was observed, consisting of two ladies and a gentleman. In one of the former, Adela, with equal surprise and pleasure, recognized the lovely stranger whom she had so long been unable to distinguish by any appellation but that of the *capricious beauty*. Talbot and Julius both discovered her nearly at the same moment, and the former immediately went up to her. Julius held back during a short interval, and attentively examined her companions: this ceremony over, he also stepped forward and made his bow with great apparent satisfaction.

The two parties now proceeded together, and Adela, much engrossed by the fair incognita, became considerably less attentive to the inanimate part of the entertainment. Frequently did the eyes of these mutually-observant ladies, meet; and frequently did Adela perceive, that she was made the sub-

ject of some whispered remark, addressed either to her brother or to Talbot. That these were not of an unfavourable nature, the flattering expression of countenance with which they were accompanied, sufficiently testified.

"You have effected," said Major Monthermer, "a complete conquest of the youngest of the newly-arrived ladies. Has she produced upon you, Miss Cleveland, an impression equally advantageous?"

"Indeed she has.—I have seen her before, and she has always struck me as being one of the most lovely creatures it is possible to behold."

"But, if any daring wight, myself for instance, should venture to controvert this opinion, would you make no allowance for diversity of taste?"

"Would you persuade me to make allowance for a perverted taste?"

"I begin to think, that this new comer is your friend, as well as your standard of perfection?"

"No, I do not even know who she is."

"Perhaps, then, I may, without offence, be permitted to declare, that had I seen her,

even before I obtained the happiness of knowing you, my heart would have been as safe from all surprise, as it is now incapable of all change."

This was a speech which Adela wished him to believe she found too ambiguous for her comprehension, though a tell-tale blush which she turned away to hide, betrayed but too palpably her consciousness of his meaning. More elated than the occasion warranted, the poor Major, hailing this delusive blush, as a happy omen, 'smiled with superior love,' and looked and felt enchanted.

His ill-suppressed, though silent, exultation, was at its height, when Adela was startled by a voice close to her ear that whispered—

"I don't half like the looks with which you listen to that insinuating Major! Take care!—You have a certain friend in Northumberland to whom I may find means of conveying some very malicious reports."

Turning hastily round, Adela discovered in the person who was speaking to her, the nameless lady she had been so zealously extolling; but ere she could answer her, the

bright vision was gone, leaving, however, a full conviction upon the mind of her auditress, that the object to whom Julius was attached—the songstress of the boat—and the *capricious beauty*, were but one and the same individual. The whispered remonstrance had not been uttered in so guarded a tone as to disguise from Adela the well-remembered voice of her mysterious acquaintance: and she now waited with impatience for an opportunity of obtaining from Talbot all the information respecting her name and family which she believed him capable of furnishing.

But Talbot, whether tutored by Julius, or disposed to mystery from motives of his own, disappointed her expectations, and declined giving her the slightest clue by which to dispel her uncertainty. In vain she urged, petitioned, and remonstrated; he remained inflexible, and she was obliged to quit Strawberry Hill as uninformed upon this subject as she had entered it.

Whilst at breakfast a few days subsequent to this excursion, Mr. Cleveland, amongst other letters brought by the post, received one of considerable length, and of

a description to excite the utmost surprise, from Sir Patrick Harley.

The methodical Baronet began by setting forth in pompous terms, his high admiration of the elegance, accomplishments, and beauty, of Miss Cleveland. He stated the wish which he had long entertained of making such proposals to her, as she and her father might deem worthy of their attention; but justified the delay to which he had been unavoidably compelled, on the plea of having had some previous arrangements to make in his affairs, which had proved slower in bringing to a termination than he had originally expected. But now that he found himself at liberty to declare his intention, it was with deep regret he learnt, that Mr. Cleveland had views for his daughter, which, he feared, were totally in opposition to his own long-indulged hopes. As this was the case (and he had reason to think his information came from undoubted authority) he ended, with much tiresome circumlocution, by making a grave application for leave to transfer the offer of his hand, title, and fortune, to Miss Cleveland's

charming sister—the gay and blooming Mrs. Erington.

The whole of this letter was listened to by Julius with bursts of uncontroulable laughter, and its conclusion almost threw him into convulsions.

"Here's a fellow of accommodating mould!" cried he; "commend me to these easy *transferrers* of affection! They are more to be envied than any class of people under heaven. A stoic loves nothing—a libertine loves a dozen at a time—a rejected Corydon breaks his heart and dies; but here's a practical philosopher, who, when foiled in one project, turns coolly to the prosecution of another, and finds, in whichsoever fair is most attainable, the most deserving object of his pursuit.

Mr. Cleveland's animadversions upon the letter were neither so merry nor so sarcastic. A match of this splendid description for either of his daughters, was no subject of derision in his eyes: and he very speedily retired to compose as handsome an answer to the Baronet's proposal as it was in the power of gratified ambition to dictate.

Meanwhile Adela, who had likewise received letters, was occupied in perusing them with the liveliest interest. That which first claimed her attention was from William Hampden. Its date gave her the immediate and welcome information, that he was at his father's; and from its general purport, she had the satisfaction of learning that his health was rapidly improving,—that his spirits were revived, and his hopes of advancement in his profession were sanguine. His father, he said, had consented to receive a loan from Lord Ennerdale towards the purchase of a company; and as soon as the negociation was finally adjusted, he expected to be called upon to join his regiment, still serving abroad. No further intelligence of the disposition which Sir Thomas Forester continued to entertain towards himself and his wife, had reached them. Mrs. Forester had never written since the plausible letter that he had shewn to Adela when they last met in town. He professed himself to be perfectly reconciled to the old Baronet's persevering neglect—"and my wife," added he, "though grieved as a daughter, bears the mortification,

"in other respects, like a true heroine. She "is delighted at her reception here, and "endears herself more and more to every "individual of my family. My mother is "particularly pleased with her, and my "sisters vie with each other in shewing her "the fondest attention. We go next Mon-"day for a week to visit your friend Ruth, "and her deserving husband, whom, from "the little I have yet seen of him, I feel "disposed to consider with much regard."

This letter could not be said to *recall* to Adela's remembrance the design which she had wished, rather than dared, to entertain of interesting her father in the cause of these young people, and of inducing him to apply in their behalf to his former associate, Sir Thomas. She had never lost sight of this object; but her own influence still appeared so feeble and precarious, that she had been unable to gather courage to venture any application. She now, however, determined, rather to hazard a repulse, than to suffer the business, many days longer, to remain unattempted.

The letter which accompanied this, came from Mrs. Erington, and was most truly

conformable to that lady's sprightly yet speculating turn of mind.

After telling Adela that she was still in Hampshire, and had no immediate thoughts of removing, she proceeded, with triumphant gaiety, to talk of her success with Sir Patrick:

"To be sincere," she said, "I accepted "the invitation hither, solely because I "knew that it would place me within five "miles of his residence, and enable me, "as he is a frequent visitor in this family, "to see him as often throughout the sum- "mer as might be needful for my project. "I had every reason to believe, that a ha- "bit of regular intercourse, or, (if you will) "call it a system of regular attack, carried "on when *you* were remote from the field "of contest, would, in the end, prove suc- "cessful. I have long held the *second* "place in his good graces; nay, whilst you "shut yourself up so closely to attend upon "Elinor during her confinement, I literally "held the *first*.—Once more, Adela, that "envied post is restored to me; and, if I "forfeit it again by suffering him to step "within the magic circle of your attrac-

"tions, call me blunderer, unworthy to
"outshine all competitors in fashion and
"in splendour, on my next appearance
"upon the London stage!

"My father will receive official information of the Baronet's fixed, though tardy resolution, by this day's post. Waste no breath in sighing at the fate to which I have condemned myself. I '*wed his acres, not his noble mind,*' and shall be quite as happy as I expect, and less liable to disappointment than half the folks who marry upon higher principles. At all events, before the expiration of a month, if you behave well, and if I approve the style of your next letter, you shall receive, from *Lady Harley*, a silver favour as brilliant as your own eyes!—But spare, spare me, good Cassandra, all useless and dejecting prophecies!"

Though Adela could not repress a smile at the substance and diction of this strange scroll, (whence so obviously peeped forth, amidst all its pretended bravery, a sentiment of latent self-reproach) she had regard enough for its infatuated writer, to consider a union formed upon such heartless and

worldly views, as a very melancholy circumstance. She had, indeed, long suspected that Alicia was deliberately aiming to supplant her in Sir Patrick's favour; but knowing the coquettish turn of her character, she had believed that this scheme was carried on more from a desire of extending her conquests, than with any serious wish of becoming his wife. The event proved how much she was mistaken, and the glittering but uninviting prospect to which Mrs. Erington was sacrificing herself, chilled her heart, whenever she reflected upon it.

Her own perplexities, however, allowed her but little time to dwell upon the probable, but self-incurred unhappiness of others. Mrs. Somerville continued to write the most pressing remonstrances against the tacit encouragement which she was giving to the Major; and Adela herself recoiled at the apparent duplicity of her conduct towards him. Flatteringly distinguished by Mr. Cleveland, he was a welcome, nay, an invited guest, at all periods of the day. Urged on by Lord Rothbury, who continually became more solicitous for the match; and perhaps instigated beyond all other

motives, by a lurking vanity which blinded him to every chance of failure, the Major had now often spoke so intelligibly, and seemed so little discomfited by Adela's grave silence, that without waiting for the formality of hearing from her lips a confirmation of his hopes, he had all the air, and, indeed, all the self-complacent feelings, of a man assured of success. It was this easy presumption that alone rendered tolerable to her the idea of the disappointment which awaited him. Had he added greater diffidence to the innumerable good qualities which she was willing to ascribe to him, her uneasiness at the treacherous tolerance she was forced to grant him, would have preyed incessantly upon her mind, and deprived her of every ray of comfort.

"I have only to hope," she mentally cried, "that the same vanity by which he is so easily beguiled, will serve, as easily, to console him. I have always heard, that men who are very confident in the success of their own merit, are cold of heart, and less subject, in case of a defeat, to the intrusions of grief, than to the more comfortable sensations of disdain."

But Major Monthermer was *not* cold of heart: and even his conceit was not the conceit of a shallow coxcomb. It resulted in part from a gay and sanguine temper, and in part, from his being wholly unpractised in affairs of serious courtship. He took it for granted, that all ladies, as young, and as much under the controul of paternal authority as Adela, listened to the professions of a lover, approved by their father, with the same silent acquiescent timidity which he had found it impossible ever to conquer in her. He was told there were reasons that prevented the immediate celebration of the marriage, but that these had any reference to her averseness from the marriage altogether, he had not the slightest suspicion. A transient delay he could well submit to; it suited better with his wishes, indeed, than a speedier engagement, as his presence in Ireland was urgently required, and he was anxious to bring the affairs which called him thither to a termination, before he connected himself with a wife whom he should be equally loth to carry with him on an unpleasant expedition, or to quit for so indefinite a period.

Meanwhile, the absurd scheme of teaching her Persian, which, at first, he so readily adopted, as a pretence for those visits that were now permitted without any pretence at all, was happily abandoned, and, to Adela's great relief, no other exclusive pursuit was substituted in its place. Music, indeed, she was still compelled to cultivate more sedulously than her natural inclination prompted; but provided the Major was by, to read, to walk, or to converse with her, Mr. Cleveland was content to remit some part of his former importunity upon the subject, and to suffer her, on the whole, to pass her time with but little molestation.

One evening, that on her return from a long ramble, taken, as usual, with Monthermer, and, at her pressing solicitation, with Julius, (who wanted, however, to direct his steps a different way) she heard, on re-entering the house, that her father was gone to spend an hour or two with Lord Rothbury. Nobody else remained to relieve her from the whole task of entertaining her military escort. Julius had quitted them at the garden-gate; Talbot was no longer their guest; and feeling very much discon-

certed at the idea of the *tête-à-tête* which awaited her, she hastily proposed their joining her father at the viscount's:

"Certainly," cried the Major, "if you wish it: but, I own, I had flattered myself that you would give me leave to take my tea without proceeding any further: since, inglorious as the confession may appear, I really am heartily tired."

"Shall I," said she, laughing, "order the coach to convey you these three hundred yards further?"

"It would be much kinder to order the tea-urn."

"But my aim is, to be kind to myself. I am tired too, and would gladly go where-ever I can escape the trouble of doing the honours of the tea-table."

"Oh, I'll dispense with your doing any honours save that of allowing me to drink it with you. And if you are too weary to talk, I'll furnish conversation for both."

"This is being amazingly generous! But how comes it, that with so much weariness, you should feel so confident of your powers of entertaining?"

"I never hinted at possessing such powers; I only said that I would talk enough for two, and left it to your own option whether to fall asleep, or to keep awake during the performance of the contract. Come, resign yourself graciously to the sort of tax which I am imposing upon you; put your fair hand to that bell, order up the tea-things, and then sit contentedly down here at your little favourite table."

"It is but fair," cried Adela, provoked at his easiness, "that I should, in my turn, condition for a few gracious boons. I have letters to answer, one of which is of real consequence. When you have dispatched this urgent affair of the tea, will you considerately put on your hat, make the best of your way home, and leave me to write without interruption?"

"I will; and now for the tea and all its pleasant accessaries."

Some of these were to Adela far from being of that description. The conversation which Monthermer had volunteered to support, turned, whilst he leisurely sipped his tea, so entirely upon the subject

of his tender passion for her, that she was distressed which way to look, or how, consistently with the restrictions her father had imposed upon her, to answer him.

At length, her natural frankness got the better, in some degree, of her scruples, and she very seriously said—

"It grieves me, not to be at liberty to reply to these professions in a perfectly explicit and honourable manner, since my silence, and the evident pleasure which my father receives from your visits, must, I fear, mislead you, Major Monthermer, respecting my present sentiments, and future intentions. I am threatened, if you withhold these visits, with being made responsible for their cessation. But for this, do me the justice to believe, that I should long since have entreated you to suspend them, or, for both our sakes, to have abstained from ever addressing me in language which I am so ill able to hear with the gratitude it merits."

The Major, in defiance of his accustomed security, was alarmed in no small degree by a speech so unequivocal, and uttered in so deliberate a voice. He be-

sought her to be wholly unreserved, and since she had gone so far, at once to tell him the worst he had to apprehend.

"I dare not be too plain with you," cried Adela, "though, trusting in your generosity, I have said thus much, in order to clear myself from the imputation of having tacitly contributed to your deception. If, in coming hither, you can rest satisfied with the single approbation of my father, you amply possess it: if you seek to gain mine, and suffer any part of your happiness to depend upon my approval of your avowed sentiments, you injure yourself, and inflict upon me very great disquiet."

"But say, lovely Adela, is this coldness the natural consequence of a pre-engaged heart? Is it, that to me you object, or that to another you are more partial?"

"Ask me nothing further, Major," cried Adela, most painfully confused. "I have surely said enough, as well for my own acquittal, as for your necessary information."

"I know not," resumed he, after a short silence, "what to conclude from this most singular conversation. That your father is my friend, I have undoubted proof; that

he wishes me to subscribe to some delay before he blesses me with your hand, you are, probably, informed; but that he would at *any* time be barbarous enough to force your compliance, I cannot believe. Neither must you, fair Adela, believe so ill of me, as to imagine that upon *such* terms I could bear to obtain it. The objections you hint at I must, therefore, flatter myself are only temporary. I will persecute you with no renewal of this theme, whilst it is declaredly so irksome to you; but suffer me to retain some hopes, and whatever may be their final issue, rest assured, that I shall exonerate you from every species of blame."

"Your hopes," said Adela, half smiling, "I am no longer responsible for; your promise of attributing to me no future censure, I am thankful, and truly rejoice at. And now, Major, remember our compact—your tea is drank, but my letters are yet unwritten."

The cheerfulness of her accent, and the mildness of her eye, dispelled some of the painful apprehensions which her preceding

seriousness had awakened; and he was rising with unmurmuring submission to obey her, when Julius again made his appearance."

"Where's my father?" he hastily demanded.

"At Lord Rothbury's," replied his sister.

"And has he been there from the time I quitted the Major and you at the gate?"

Almost tempted to laugh at the singularity of this abrupt question in the Major's presence, Adela frankly answered—"He was there even before that time."

Julius said nothing more, but threw himself on the sofa, exhibiting in his aspect a mingled expression of sadness and irritation, which his sister could not behold without at once dreading and wishing to hear it explained. She waited only till Monthermer was gone, and then affectionately approached, and would have questioned him; but he turned petulantly from her, saying—

"Pray don't let me, by the uninteresting detail of my vexations, drive out of your imagination all the agreeable things

which you have given your gallant Major so kind an opportunity of addressing to you."

"It would, I fancy," said Adela, "be a much greater act of charity to drive from the poor Major's own remembrance all the agreeable things he has been hearing from me."

"Don't be disingenuous, Adela; the man went away as self-satisfied as I almost ever saw him."

"Whence he derives food for such apparent complacency, is beyond my power of comprehension; since nothing can be more certain, than that far from giving any occasion to it, I most unreservedly told him, that it was only in obedience to my father's commands I ever permitted his visits."

"Did you, upon your honour, say any thing like this to him?"

"In even stronger terms, my dear Julius, than I have now used in repeating the declaration to you."

"Then what does the egregious coxcomb mean by that look of unmortified composure with which he made his parting bow?"

"He means to rest upon a groundless hope, that time will operate a change in my sentiments."

"He is a happy man who, upon so frail a support, can preserve himself from sinking into discouragement. I would that *I* could find it as easy to bid defiance to its approaches."

"My dearest brother, what has made you thus desponding?"

"O, Adela! she is going—the day, the very hour is fixed! I have this moment left her—and if you knew with what unspeakable wretchedness, my kind, my affectionate Adela, you would pity me from the bottom of your heart!"

Adela did indeed pity him, for never had she seen anguish more strongly impressed upon any human countenance. She sat down beside him and putting her arm within his, gently and soothingly said—

"Would to heaven I had any power to serve you! Perhaps, dearest Julius, were you wholly to confide in me, I might be able to suggest some hint, some proposal, from which your affairs might derive advantage. Blindfolded as I now am, it is

impossible I should either advise with, or console you as I wish. Distrust me no longer, my loved brother; open to me your whole heart, and if I can afford you no aid, be assured at least, that I shall most tenderly feel for, and would sooner die than betray you."

"I have not deserved this kindness from you," cried Julius, throwing his arm around her. "My poor Adela! it is through me that you have been rendered unhappy, and this generous concern for my distress is more than I can bear to see you suffer. Good and dear girl, forgive me!"

"How can I forgive, where I have harboured no resentment?" cried she. "But, Julius, disappoint not thus my hope of obtaining your confidence. Tell me what it is that so heavily afflicts you? Whither is the sweet creature going, to whom you are so fondly attached?"

"Adela, you must not too closely question me. I am completely unhappy, and it would be a great consolation to me to communicate to you my whole history; but it must not be. I religiously believe, that what I now endure is sent to visit on

my own head all the misery I inflicted upon your's! I must bear it, however, without making you its depositary. Indeed, the painful secret is not exclusively mine to reveal; and I have been repeatedly cautioned (by one who may be pardoned for harbouring greater distrust of your prudence than I should feel) never to betray to you the perplexities by which I am harassed."

"If such are your obligations to be mysterious," said Adela, "I must submit: but I could not love you, Julius, as I do, if I felt perfectly content when I saw you agitated and unhappy, to be held in ignorance of the cause. I have dejected you by no prognostics of evil—I have fatigued you by no exhortations—yet I have always had my fears of what your intimacy with this fair incomprehensible would end in. There seems so little reason to apprehend, that your influence with my father would fail in obtaining his approbation of your attachment to any woman of real character and fashion, that I can discern no possible motive or excuse for the strange obscurity of your recent proceedings; unless, indeed, it

originates in the opposition made to your views by the lady's own connections. But even in that case, why do you not prevail upon my father to step forward to your assistance—to plead your cause for you? His devoted affection ought to convince you, that there is no exertion he would not make to promote your true advantage, your well-founded expectations of happiness."

"Were I less miserable," cried Julius, "I could laugh at the mistaken wisdom of this reasoning, and at the solemn gravity with which it is so ineffectually urged. Much older and more experienced heads than your's, my dear Adela, have fallen into the misfortune of giving blundering and erroneous advice, when their information upon a subject has been imperfect. You would look aghast, were you fully told how ruinous to my prospects would be the steps you recommend. Preach to me, therefore, no more, nor pretend to give counsel in an affair you so ill comprehend; but comfort, or at least tranquillize me, by enduring with patience to let me indulge before you all the melancholy which, in the presence of others, I must strive to conceal."

CHAP. XIII.

AGITATION.

By the unruffled calmness of her father's aspect when he returned home, Adela felt assured that the Major had betrayed to him no part of their conversation which could give him displeasure. On the contrary, he seemed highly satisfied with her for having, during tea, admitted such a companion, and was in so unusually benign a humour, that she seized the favourable moment for making an attempt upon his heart in behalf of William Hampden and his lovely wife.

Mr. Cleveland listened to her simple statement of the embarrassments of the young couple with far greater interest than she had expected him to shew.

The name of his old friend, Sir Thomas Forester, was associated in his remembrance with that of some of the happiest years of his early life; and the assurance which he

now received, that the secluded Baronet had often been heard speaking of him with warmer kindness than of any other human being, revived all his own, and determined him (after a night's deliberation) to put to the test, by a personal application, the influence which Mrs. Hampden had asserted he still retained. At breakfast, the following morning, he communicated to Adela his purpose.

"I have business," said he, "relative to the purchase of some land at the distance of scarcely more than twenty miles from the residence of Sir Thomas; and as change of air may at this time be particularly beneficial to me, I think, in two or three days, I will set out on this double negociation, and try what I can effect for those rash young people in the course of a short visit to my old friend."

Adela, overjoyed at such intelligence, most gratefully thanked him, and at the same time inquired whether he thought that she could do any good to the cause by accompanying him?

"I will write to you," said Mr. Cleveland, "if I find reason to regret not hav-

ing taken you with me: but, without ascertaining how far your society might be acceptable to the poor valetudinarian, I should be loth to force you into his presence. Remain here, therefore, under your brother's care; you have many friendly neighbours, and I am persuaded will experience no neglect. If your hear nothing from me at the expiration of a week, you may conclude that I am on my journey home."

Foreseeing much embarrassment from being continually liable to the visits of the Major, Adela now ventured to solicit her father's permission to invite some female friend to spend with her the interval of his absence.

"Whom would you propose?" inquired he. "Barbara and Jemima, as you well know, left town with my brother and Mrs. Cleveland ten days ago."

"And by the way," cried Julius, "in a letter which I had yesterday from Talbot, I hear that Jemima is extremely ill, from the effects of a violent cold caught after dancing. I certainly neither very highly respect nor love her; but I should be sorry

the poor creature were to lose her life for so paltry a frolic as a country ball."

"Is there any reason to believe her life at all in danger?" demanded Mr. Cleveland.

"Of two things, both sufficiently disagreeable," replied Julius, "I fancy that one must happen—she will either lose her life, or the use of her limbs. The whole severity of the attack seems to have fallen upon her joints; and Talbot says, that the physician leaves them little hopes of her ever being able to walk again without crutches."

This melancholy intelligence engrossed their whole conversation till breakfast was over, when, as Mr. Cleveland arose to go into his study, Adela timidly renewed her solicitation for leave to provide herself with some associate of her own sex, and mentioned Miss Rivers, who was still in the neighbourhood, as the lady whom she wishedto invite.

"Miss Rivers," said her father, glancing his eyes towards Julius, "is rather a dangerous inmate for a young and idle man."

"Miss Rivers, Sir, said Julius," rising

and sauntering to a window, "will be as secure from experiencing any undue gallantry from me, as I shall ever be secure from losing my heart to a pupil of her mother's training."

"She is a very good girl, I believe," resumed his father, "let who will have trained her: but I own I have no ambition to see her your wife. However, as by what you say she does not appear to be very likely ever to become an object of formidable attraction to you, and her accomplishments will render her a valuable companion to your sister, she has my consent to propose the visit to her."

Mrs. Rivers was too well pleased to grasp at any opportunity of domesticating her daughter in a house containing a young and wealthy bachelor, not to subscribe most readily to Adela's plan; and three days after it had been first projected, Miss Rivers became her pleased and willing guest. Mr. Cleveland, the same morning, departed on his meditated journey, and Adela found herself committed to the guidance of her own discretion—though, nominally, to the protection of her brother.

But of that brother, companionable and friendly as he had hitherto been, she now scarcely enjoyed the society an hour in the day. He seemed to live only on horseback, and was so seldom at home, even to meals, that the ceremony of waiting for him was gradually intermitted, and the expectation of ever beholding him before night, was insensibly abandoned.

In this situation of affairs, it was to Adela a real and invaluable comfort to possess in her elegant guest so constant a protectress, whether at home or abroad, from the risk of being constrained to see the Major alone. She had, indeed, early on her father's departure, signified to him, that unless accompanied by Mrs. Monthermer, she should deem his visits utterly improper: yet it might not have been always in her power to avoid them. He had of late taken a violent passion for rowing, and never entered his boat without passing Mr. Cleveland's unfenced and sloping lawn, and accurately surveying the premises, in order, if Adela was visible, to stop and converse with her, and on some pretence or other solicit permission to join her.

She gaily reminded him, on these occasions, of the absence of his matronly *chaperon*; refused all his entreaties, both for herself and her friend, to embark with him; and abridging the conference as much as was practicable, sent him away, despairing to behold her in comfort till the evening, when he usually induced either Lord Rothbury or his mother to be the companions of his visit.

On the fifth day after her father's departure, Adela was surprised as she came down from her dressing-room before dinner, by the unexpected sight of Talbot. He and her brother (who on that occasion remained at home) were walking up and down the hall, engaged in earnest, but almost whispered conversation, whilst her fair companion, Miss Rivers, was left to saunter alone in the garden.

They both approached Adela, however, the instant she appeared, and without giving her time to speak, eagerly assigned a variety of excuses (all equally unnecessary and frivolous) for the new guest's arrival.

She assured them that they were giving

themselves muchsuperfluous trouble, as she certainly wished to hear no excuses for a visit which could only be a pleasure to her: "And I congratulate myself sincerely," added she, smiling, "that any inducement has been found powerful enough, to detain my brother at home for even a single day."

Julius understood the reproach which these words implied: but he had nothing to plead in his vindication that suited at once his interest and his veracity; and turning on his heel, marched off into the drawing-room.

Adela enquired with kindness how Talbot had left his sick sister, and was shocked to hear of the deplorable state in which she still remained.—Her physician's worst predictions seemed to be decidedly fulfilling; and it appeared as if his patient was destined, henceforward, to know no removal but from a bed to a sofa:

"Christina," Talbot added, "behaves on this melancholy occasion like the genuine pupil of her long, so affectionately beloved, cousin Adela. She is never absent from the poor sufferer's room, whose spirits she endeavours to cheer, and whose calamity

she seeks to alleviate by every attention which a kind disposition can suggest. I grieve to say that Jemima does not, at present, shew herself so sensible of the merit of this assiduity as we all wish. But the time must come, when she will more gratefully acknowledge it. And, meanwhile, indifferent to the reception which they meet, Christina perseveres in her humane exertions, as if aiming merely at the approbation of her own excellent heart. I cannot describe to you how much she has exalted herself in my mother's opinion by so admirable a system of conduct. She is rapidly becoming a declared as well as deserving favourite."

Adela was more touched than surprised by these details of her young friend's benevolence of nature; and repeatedly told Talbot, that there was nothing amiable, nothing praise-worthy which might not be expected from her.

After dinner, the two young men, very soon forsaking their wine, sallied forth together, and did not re-enter the house till late at night.

The succeeding day, Talbot devoted

more time to the ladies; but his thoughts were evidently pre-occupied, and, to Adela, he appeared full of care and anxiety. At dinner, this pre-occupation seemed to increase, and it was with difficulty that he could force himself to support any share whatever in the conversation. He vanished almost as soon as the cloth was withdrawn; and Julius himself remained invisible throughout the whole day.

Miss Rivers knew too little of the accustomed mode of living at the residence of her new friend, to be struck by these continual exits. Her talents afforded her resources for every minute of the day, and at no time had the hours hung less heavy on her hands than at the present period. She was gradually becoming more and more pleased with her lovely hostess. Their dispositions seemed to accord most perfectly; and the few guests who were occasionally admitted to enliven their retirement, interested or entertained without subjecting her to ceremony or fatigue. Undesigning, contented, and free from every species of conceit, she proved in all respects a companion more delightful than Adela, partial as she

had ever been to her, had even ventured to expect. A habit of daily intercourse was fast cementing their mutual good-will into affection and intimacy, when a subject of the severest alarm drove from their minds all attention to themselves, and left scarcely to either of them, but to Adela in particular, ability to think of any thing, save the distress that awaited Mr. Cleveland.

The time which he had specified (that is, a week) for setting out on his return, was fully elapsed, and, for two nights and two days, Julius had never been at home! Talbot, also, during the last twenty-four hours, had wholly absconded, and Adela was very speedily informed that their servants were missing likewise.

She instantly, on hearing this, dispatched a messenger to the house in Hertford-street, as well as to General Cleveland's in Berkeley-square, hoping they might have been seen, or at least heard of, at one of those two places.

The answer brought back, was most dispiriting. At neither of the houses had any account whatever been obtained of them.

What next to suggest, she was wholly at

a loss. The domestics around her all looked full of conjecture and wonder. She was herself dismayed beyond the power of concealment; and Miss Rivers, extremely concerned for her, neither knew what consolation to offer, nor, from the agitation in which she beheld her, what conclusions to draw.

On pretence of indisposition, their accustomed visitors were excluded. Amongst the number, there was only one in whom Adela felt any inclination to confide.— This was Lord Rothbury, whose age and sound judgment qualified him to be a respectable friend and useful adviser. But she knew not whether her father would consider him as a person sufficiently privileged by long-established intimacy to be made the confidant of family affairs: and on maturer reflection, she herself became reluctant to publish, to one wholly unconnected with them, the suspicions and alarm that harassed her.

Invariably her thoughts pointed towards the nameless guest at Mrs. Elmer's. She would have given the universe to ascertain whether any lady had, within the two last

days, been missing from thence. But whom could she employ to make the enquiry? No renewal of intercourse had been sought for on either side, since she and Mrs. Elmer had been residents at Richmond; indeed, the visits of Adela to that lady, had been expressly prohibited by Mr. Cleveland, as well as discouraged by Julius;—and therefore, suddenly to appear at the house on such an errand, she felt to be impossible.—It was equally so, to entrust the commission to a domestic; since, if her feelings of sisterly delicacy recoiled from betraying her fears to Lord Rothbury, how infinitely greater were the objections to exposing them not only to her own household, but to the whole establishment of the gay Mrs. Elmer!—

An elopement, she was convinced, had taken place. Who the lady was, on whose account Julius had thought himself compelled to adopt such a measure, she was utterly incompetent to decide: but of this she was certain;—that it would inflict upon her father the keenest disquietude.—Where to direct to him, she was ignorant: there was every reason, however, to believe, that

he was on his way home, and would be at the Villa in the course either of the present or the succeeding day.

Her only refuge against total inactivity (that most intolerable of grievances to a troubled mind) was in writing without delay to Mrs. Somerville. That Lady's vicinity to the Scottish borders (on the probable supposition that her brother had taken the road so often traced by fugitives of a similar description), might enable her to act in the affair, either personally or by proxy, with some effect; and it was a relief, though but a temporary one, to Adela's disturbance, to occupy herself in detailing it to so firm and affectionate a friend.

When her letter was written and sent off, all the restlessness of protracted suspense recoiled upon her; and the dread of seeing her father overwhelmed by so unexpected an event, haunted her without cessation.

As the time drew nearer when his return was hourly anticipated by all the principal servants, as well as by herself, she could not remain in one spot, or engage in any species of occupation a moment: but wandering listlessly through the rooms without

aim, and almost without consciousness, she found herself at last in Mr. Cleveland's study, and started on beholding, upon his writing table, an unopened letter directed in her brother's hand.

Surprised that it had not been perceived and mentioned to her before, she eagerly rung the bell, and enquired whether her brother had left it there himself, or whether it had recently arrived, and been placed in its present situation, by any person now in the house?

With one voice, the domestics all professed not to know any thing of the matter—no one had seen such a letter—no one had even suspected its existence!

This was not an assertion that she found it very easy to credit: the room had never been locked, and the preceding day two female servants had been busied several hours in cleaning and arranging it. But Adela knew, that where mystery is intended, it is useless to evince disbelief, unless the means of effecting a detection are easily attainable. She had no such means, and of this she was sensible that the servants were perfectly convinced.

She therefore dismissed without reproach, though not without vexation, the disclaiming household, and remained anxiously meditating upon the propriety of leaving the letter where she had found it, or of taking it into her own possession to deliver it to her father after she had had leisure to prepare him for its probable contents. The Study being the room in which all letters that came for him in his absence were generally deposited, it was certain that it would be nearly one of the first which he would enter; and how might the sudden disclosure of his son's flight, operate upon a frame debilitated by recent sickness, shaken by actual fatigue, and at all times subject to being powerfully affected by mental irritation?

"Such a blow," cried she, "may stun him irrecoverably! I dare not let it fall upon him without endeavouring to break its force by some preparatory intimation.—Oh, Julius! what would eternally be your remorse, were the abrupt communication of this act of yours, to produce fatal effects upon the life of a parent, who has ever so indulgently, so partially, loved you!"—

This thought determined her; and she hastened out of the room, bearing the important letter with her.

About an hour before dinner Mr. Cleveland arrived.

Though pale and shaking, Adela, dreading the indiscretion of the servants, flew to the gate to meet him. His unsuspecting—his even cheerful greetings pierced her to the heart; it was evident that no tidings of mischief had yet found their way to him, and she saw with consternation, that the whole task of revealing what had happened, must inevitably be hers.

On quitting the carriage, he accompanied his daughter to the usual sitting-room; thanked Miss Rivers with much politeness for granting to his young housekeeper the indulgence of her company; and then enquired where Julius was, and how he had in general disposed of his time, whilst left to be their guardian?

"He has been very little at home," answered the embarrassed Adela.

"Has he done the honours of his boat with proper gallantry? Have Miss Rivers

and you been often out with him upon the water?"

"No, Sir; he has been almost perpetually on horseback."

Mr. Cleveland asked nothing further, but sitting down, told Adela that he would give her some account of the success of his visit to Sir Thomas Forester. She thanked him, and drawing a chair next to his, endeavoured to appear as much interested in the recital, as she really would have felt, had her thoughts been less painfully engaged.

"I will not," said her father, "make a very long history of the particulars attending my reception at the singular but worthy Baronet's. It is sufficient to inform you, that with more satisfaction to himself than pleasure to his daughter-in-law, I took up my abode for two days beneath his roof; and though narrowly observed, and seldom permitted to converse with him alone, I found means to introduce the subject which you have so much at heart, and even to render my interference of considerable avail. What I had not an opportunity of detailing fully to Sir Thomas himself,

I communicated to an old and faithful attendant upon his person, whom I found extremely willing to become an advocate in the cause, and whose privileged assiduity gave him power, at moments when no interruption was to be apprehended, to second and enforce the arguments of pacification which I had used.

"The Baronet acknowledged to me, that this fugitive Annabel was the child he had always most fondly favoured; even in her brother's life-time she had been treated with singular partiality, and since that brother's death, the indulgence which she experienced had been unbounded. But an acquaintance of a week," added he, "a young flashy fellow, without name, without rank, without a guinea, save his lieutenant's pay, has put to flight the remembrance of all my kindness for seventeen years; and has even caused her to neglect me as unfeelingly since her marriage, as if the ties of nature were as completely forgotten as those of gratitude and duty."

"I gave you as my authority, Adela," pursued Mr. Cleveland, "for asserting that the young culprit had *not* been thus ne-

glectful. I told him, that she had written repeatedly. I spoke in general terms of the respectability of Dr. Hampden and his whole family. I mentioned the good conduct, in his professional career, of the military bridegroom—and, to cut the matter short, came away empowered to send the erring couple without delay to receive his blessing and his forgiveness."

The joyful surprise with which she heard this happy termination of her father's little narrative, drove for some minutes all sense of disquietude from Adela's warm and friendly heart. Her thanks for what he had undertaken, and what he had so prosperously effected, were as energetic as they were sincere; and Mr. Cleveland's complacent aspect whilst she spoke, shewed that he loved her the better for having so successfully laboured to oblige her.

"But how, Sir," inquired she, when her first delight had a little subsided, "how did Mrs. Forester endure to let you depart invested with such powers? They are precisely those which she has made it apparent it was most her wish that Sir Thomas should never be prevailed upon to grant."

"Her flagrant, her abominable duplicity," replied Mr. Cleveland, "involved her, when once detected, in deep and well-merited disgrace with the benefactor upon whose credulous nature she had so unworthily imposed. When I left them, she had been forbidden his presence, and remained a hateful and convicted impostor in the eyes of the whole house."

He then arose to go and dress for dinner, inquiring, as he left the room, when he might expect to see his son?

Adela, with ill-disguised agitation, stammered out, that his return was uncertain.

"Do you suppose him to be in London, or at any of his friends in this neighbourhood?"

"I don't exactly know, Sir, where to suppose him."

"Suppositions and exactness," said Mr. Cleveland, half smiling, "seldom go together. However, if he returns before my usual time of going to rest, I shall be satisfied."

He then calmly left the room.

CHAP. XIV.

EXPLANATION.

THE instant the door was closed, Adela sunk into a chair near it, and wept without control:—

"Oh, Miss Rivers," exclaimed she, as that young lady, with looks of sincere commiseration, flew to her, "how shall I, without, perhaps, destroying him, wean my poor father from the ill-timed security in which he is wrapped?—Never, never did I feel greater reluctance to inflict upon him even a shadow of pain!—How good he has been in this affair of the Hampdens;—how kindly he accepted my acknowledgments; how easy, how serene he looks!—Ah, tell me, my dear Louisa, is it not the height of misery to be obliged, at such a moment, to announce to him distressing tidings?"—

"I am conscious of being very ill qualified," said Miss Rivers, "to advise you.

Yet, were it my own case, I think I should defer every unpleasant communication till Mr. Cleveland rose from table. Let him partake with you of, at least, one tranquil and refreshing meal after his journey;—and recollect, that as all information has necessarily been deferred so long, no great inconvenience can result from a delay of a few hours longer."

Every reprieve was welcome to the frightened Adela. She knew that her father would see no one before she met him again, except Gerard, the valet who had travelled with him, and from whose known prudence, there was no cause to apprehend that he would needlessly retail any reports which he might have heard since his return. She therefore adopted the opinion of her young adviser without scruple, and they repaired, at the same moment, to their several apartments for the purpose of dressing.

When dinner was over, seizing the opportunity, whilst her father was slumbering in his arm-chair, to hold a private conference with Gerard, Adela sent for him into the breakfast-room.

She began by saying, that as he had now

been so many hours in the house, she imagined he was but too well informed of her brother's disappearance?—He bowed with an air of silent concern.—She then produced the letter which Julius had either left, or sent, for her father, and begged that, to the best of his judgment, Gerard would advise her how, and when, to deliver it.—

"Forgive my plainness, Madam," said the intelligent domestic:—"but my opinion is, that it ought not to have been withheld a moment. My master, I fear, will be much displeased when he discovers that you have, for any cause, kept it back. Allow me, without acquainting him with your previous knowledge of it, to carry it to him directly. I will say, that it has but this instant been found."

"Oh, Mr. Gerard, forbear going in with it yet a little longer! My poor father is asleep. Do not suddenly awaken him to put before his eyes, without any preparation, a letter which will, probably, be so cruel a shock to him!"

"Perhaps, Madam, it contains some softening circumstances, which may better tend to reconcile him to the flight of Mr. Julius

than any thing that we could say. At all events, I dare no longer defer its delivery. Pray go back to the room in which you left my master, and I will follow you, after a short delay, that shall take off the appearance of anycollusion between us."

Adela, dismayed at the error which she had unintentionally committed, retired from this short conference with tenfold increased anxiety, and again rejoined her father. Miss Rivers had retreated to her own apartment; and Mr. Cleveland, as his daughter had told Gerard, was in a sound and placid sleep.

"And must he," thought she, affectionately regarding him as she gently crossed the floor, "must he be disturbed from this needful and salutary slumber?—Ah, how long it may be ere he sleeps thus composedly again!"—

The unmerciful Gerard, however, who, perhaps, by his impatient master, had sometimes incurred reproof for being dilatory, shewed none of these refinements of compassion; but now entering with scarcely any caution to avoid awakening him with a start, he walked coolly up to his chair, saying: "Here's a let-

ter, Sir, which I have just discovered, was lying for you on your Study table."

Then placing it within reach of the, yet, only half-conscious slumberer, he immediately retired.—

After some moments spent in vainly trying to shake off the drowsiness that oppressed him, Mr. Cleveland said: "Adela, open this letter for me, and see who it is from."

Adela approached, but merely taking the mysterious epistle in her hand, without attempting to unseal it, she hesitatingly said—

"It is from Julius, Sir; had you not better let it remain till you are able to read it yourself?"

"From Julius?" repeated he, forcing open his eyes—"Why should he write?—Ah, I doubt not, it is to apply for money!—The boy is perpetually getting into some scrape, from which my purse must be taxed to relieve him."—

Adela retreated whilst he broke the wax, and had even the forbearance, partly from delicacy, partly from fear, not to look at her father whilst he was reading. She dreaded to hear his first sentence after the lec-

ture was over—and almost dreaded the first glance of his eye.

Whatever was the purport of the scroll, it seemed of considerable length, and intensely riveted its reader's attention to the very end. From time to time, a vehement exclamation burst from him, but whether partaking most of anger, grief, or amazement, Adela found it difficult to decide.

At length, she heard the rustling of the paper as he folded it up; and after a profound pause, he said in a tone of concentrated emotion,—

"This letter has been written four days: has Julius been absent so long?"

Adela faintly answered, "He has, Sir!"

"You should have told me this immediately;—you should have written to me the instant you missed him."—

"I knew not, Sir, with any certainty, where a letter would find you."—

"That is true: but an express sent to me at Sir Thomas Forester's, might have been directed to follow me, whatever route I had taken.—However, I blame you not in anger;—the delay is immaterial, since nothing could have been done."

He spoke with a calmness which, though forced, Adela derived some comfort from; and she now ventured to say—

"Great as were the perplexity and terror which the first discovery of my brother's departure gave me, I yet trust, dearest Sir, that his affairs may take a happy turn, and that all may terminate to your satisfaction."

"Adela," resumed Mr. Cleveland, "I am well pleased at the honourable reserve with which you declined reading this rash boy's explanatory letter. He assures me, that you are wholly unacquainted with the secret of his affairs. If such is the case, it is the only part of his recent conduct that merits to escape condemnation. A few days now must dissipate the mystery: meanwhile, suspend your enquiries, and disguise your uneasiness from every eye."

Adela confirmed her brother's assertion of the past ignorance in which she had been held; and Mr. Cleveland, evidently reluctant to pursue the conversation, bade her rejoin her young friend, and retired into his study to write.

That the intelligence which she had so

much dreaded his learning wore a double aspect, and though it agitated him, had likewise left an opening for hope, so sincerely rejoiced her, that she met Miss Rivers with a countenance enlivened by the most cheering presages.

"I am truly happy," said that amiable girl, "to see, once more, the symptom of a smile upon your countenance. You have, I presume, found your father less sensibly affected by the late occurrence than you had expected, and I sincerely congratulate you upon being relieved from the apprehensions, on his account, which you had entertained."

She then very frankly requested Adela to tell her, whether, at such a period, her presence might not be a restraint extremely unacceptable to Mr. Cleveland?—"I am willing," added she, "though, believe me, far from anxious, to terminate my visit immediately. Your kindness has made it delightful to me, notwithstanding the cloud, which, during these last three or four days, has hung over us; but I am not selfish enough to wish to prolong it one moment beyond the time that would be equally desirable to yourself and your father."—

"My father," cried Adela, gratefully taking her hand, "shews not, I am happy to say, the remotest inclination to deprive me of the pleasure which I receive from your society; and if *you* can prevail upon yourself not to be in any haste to deprive me of it either, it will be the greatest act of charity you can perform. You will assist me in supporting his spirits; and such is my confidence in your extreme good-nature, that with this object in view, I feel more than half tempted to believe, you will submit without repining to the dullness of your visit."—

Miss Rivers insisted no further upon her plan of immediate departure: and neither she nor Adela saw any reason afterwards to distrust the hospitable feelings which Mr. Cleveland continued to entertain.

But that gentleman, though anxious to appear at ease, his daughter plainly perceived, was most tormentingly agitated, unhinged, and at intervals, even desponding. The sight of Lord Rothbury, and his kinsman, whose assiduous visits used to give him so much pleasure, seemed now, almost to inflict upon him pain. Much of his time he spent

in slowly traversing the garden walks, alone and full of thought;—in re-perusing his son's letter;—in eagerly examining every morning and evening newspaper, or in privately questioning his confidential Gerard, whose sole employment it now seemed to be, to sally forth on a daily succession of secret embassies to London, or its environs.

When evening came, and these resources against the misery of sitting down in passive inquietude, were exhausted, or unavoidably suspended, Mr. Cleveland's dejection, in defiance of all his efforts, became no less obvious than pitiable. He could devote no permanent attention to any thing: conversation, music, reading, all seemed equally oppressive to him; every ring at the gate, every footstep crossing the hall, shook his nerves, and overthrew his, but dissembled, firmness.

It was most melancholy, during these long hours, to witness, without the means of allaying, such evident discomposure: whatever on Adela's part, the liveliest sentiments of duty and affection, and on that of Miss Rivers, the sincerest disposition to second her endeavours, could suggest in its mitiga-

tion, was perseveringly attempted. They affected spirits which they did not feel;—perused books which they had no curiosity to peruse,—and sung, when, in fact, they were more disposed to cry.—Their exertions were suffered, but scarcely perceived—tolerated, but never encouraged.

Three days, and three irksome evenings, were thus spent. Julius had been gone a week, and no letter either from himself, from Talbot, or from Mrs. Somerville, in answer to the one addressed to her by Adela, had yet been received. Mr. Cleveland's consternation increased with every passing hour, and threatened the most serious ill-consequences to his health. Adela was in terror for him, and more poignantly displeased with her brother than she had hitherto ever felt. Scarcely could she forbear taxing him openly with ingratitude and inhumanity; and ample was the share of resentment, almost equally severe, which she bestowed upon Talbot himself.

Thus were affairs situated, and Major Monthermer (encouraged by her for the first time since he had declared his sentiments, to lengthen his visit) was sitting with them after

tea, vainly assisting hei own and Miss Rivers's efforts to dispel the gloom imprinted upon her father's brow, when, on hearing some little bustle amongst the servants in the hall, they unanimously paused—listened—and, in imitation of Adela, were starting up to make enquiries. The door flew open, however, before she could reach it, and Talbot precipitately entered.

Mr. Cleveland darted forward on beholding him, and wildly exclaimed—

" Is Julius—oh, Talbot,—tell me, is Julius . . ." *Safe* he would have added, but checked, partly by the violence of his own emotions, partly by the presence of the Major, he looked the question he was unable to utter, and stood fixedly regarding his nephew with eyes that almost started from their sockets, and lips that quivered, and were blanched with terror.

" Let, me have some conversation with you, Sir, in another room," cried Talbot, much concerned at the excess of his uncle's perturbation,—" I have nothing but good to announce; calm yourself, and come with me into your study."—

Then, as he passed Adela, in his way

towards the door, he stopped a moment, and would have spoken to her: but she shook her head with an air of reproach, refused to give him her hand, and in a low voice, said—

"Cruel Talbot!—how much you have contributed to all that my poor father has suffered!"

"You will regret the unkindness of this accusation," cried he, extremely hurt at her seriousness, "if, indeed, soon, you do not dismiss me too completely from your thoughts, even to recollect your own injustice!"

Such an answer, surprised no less than it pained her, and her eyes followed him as he quitted the room with looks of perplexed enquiry: but Mr. Cleveland gave him no time to speak again, anxious to hasten with him into a more private apartment.

Soon after their retreat, Major Monthermer, seeing Adela too much disquieted for conversation on general and indifferent subjects, and conscious that some domestic affair was under discussion, in which he, probably, could have no interest, had the delicacy to take leave.

To the few families Mr. Cleveland visited

in the environs of his villa, the disappearance of Julius, though it was no secret, was wholly inexplicable The cause to which the majority attributed it, was some pecuniary involvement which he was fearful of communicating to his father. Others, informed of the duel in which he had once been engaged, ascribed to a second affair of the same nature his present abscondence:—and all agreed, that had his flight taken place with a lady, she must, as well as himself, have been missed. Great and indefatigable had been the diligence exerted to ascertain, whether any youthful female—classing either as maid, widow, or wife—had as unceremoniously vanished as the convicted Julius. But no complaining guardian, father, or husband, had hitherto been discovered. Every house seemed to have its allotted complement of fair inhabitants;— every celebrated beauty was, as usual, visible at every accustomed haunt; and not a single deficiency had been observed amongst intriguing wives and ugly heiresses.—Neither the plain without money, nor the beautiful without fashion, were enquired after or taken into the account:—it being well known, that they are

a description of persons who are never run away with.

The absence of Mr. Cleveland, though it scarcely lasted half an hour, appeared to Adela endless.—Had tidings of good, as Talbot announced, been all whic hhe had to reveal, would so long an interview have been requisite to communicate them?—She looked every moment at her watch;—she thought Talbot and her father equally unmindful of her feelings, thus to protract her suspense;—and had she believed, that the fate of her future life depended irrevocably upon the result of this conversation, she could not have felt more deeply interested to learn what that result had been.

At length, Mr. Cleveland's voice reached her ear as he unclosed the Study door, and she heard him say, in an accent that sounded animated and cheerful—

"Be patient, and I will send her to you."

"It is me, he means," cried she, rejoicingly—"Oh, how happy I shall be when these distracting perplexities are all cleared up!"

She sprung forward, and met her father as he entered,—"You told Talbot, dearest

Sir," she eagerly cried, "that you would, I think, send me to him? May I then, immediately go, and satisfy my impatience to hear all that he is come to communicate?"

Mr. Cleveland took hold of both her hands, and pressed them between his own with silent but expressive affection. Adela gazed at him with grateful amazement. His eyes were filled with tears, yet beaming with joy; a smile of mingled sensibility and delight played over his countenance,—that countenance on which an entirely new character seemed benignantly impressed.

"My dearest father," exclaimed Adela, deeply penetrated by his unwonted kindness, "what is it that has thus visibly affected you?—How transported, yet how touched you look!"

He once more pressed her hands, and when able to speak, said in a tone for which she could have fallen at his feet to thank him—

"Go, my dear child—for I am totally incapable, at this agitated minute, of giving you the explanation which you so solicitously demand."

She stopped to imprint a kiss of acknow-

ledgment upon each of the hands that held hers, and then flew impatiently towards the Study.

It was opened for her as she approached;—she darted through the door-way—turned to address Talbot,—and found herself in the presence—found herself, (giddy from excess of astonishment) supported by the arms of Lord Ennerdale!

What he said—what were the impassioned protestations which he poured forth, she was too overwhelmingly agitated to hear. Breathing short—her complexion rapidly varying, her limbs almost tottering beneath their weight, she could only in faint, yet enraptured accents, exclaim—

"Oh, Algernon! Can this be possible? Good Heaven, can it, indeed, be possible, that such a meeting has been authorized by —*my father!*"

"Your father, my ever-loved, my own Adela,—my now promised bride!—Your father himself privileged me to tell you, that he sanctions the dearest wish of my heart!—That he accepts me for his son;—that he bestows upon me the hand which I have so long and so vainly sighed to obtain!—Will not you, my unutterably dear Adela, whom

hitherto, to my despair, I have ever found so inflexibly observant of all parental decrees, will you not now confirm the hopes he bids me cherish?—Will you be obedient only when he commands my rejection?—when he interdicts even the sight of my hand-writing?—when he almost engages you to another?"

Adela, recovering gradually her bewildered perceptions, looked at him with a playful smile, and said—

"This last accusation, I perceive by the solemnity with which it is uttered, you regard in so very heinous a light, that it will require some time and some eloquence to effect my justification. But let me defer it till I hear what has brought all the wonders of this meeting about. Where is Talbot?—Did you come with him?—Is my brother in any degree instrumental to your having been thus favourably received?"

He now led her to a seat, and placing himself next to her—

"Had I," said he, "disastrous news to relate, I trust that I should be more circumspect: but to shorten suspense by even an abrupt disclosure of tidings that are pleasant, can never be injurious.—In three words

then, my Adela, learn, that your brother is now also become *my* brother—that he is the husband of my sister!"

The start, the sudden animation with which she clasped her hands, and fixed her sparkling eyes upon his face, as if to read in its expression the full confirmation of this joyful but extraordinary intelligence, drew from Lord Ennerdale a smile, and gratified him in the most sensible degree:

"I judge from these silent indications of pleasurable surprise," said he, "that the new relation you have obtained, will experience from you at your first meeting, a truly sisterly, a kind and even a glad reception. Few circumstances will give her greater delight. She speaks of you, I am assured, with an admiration—an eagerness to be permitted to claim your friendship, which almost entitles her to obtain it independent of every other consideration."—

"Let us talk," cried Adela hastily, "of the flattering dispositions which she condescends to entertain for me, at some other moment: but at the present, in pity to my impatience, tell me nothing, Lord Ennerdale,

that does not relate to this incredible—this astonishing marriage."—

"And why, my sweet Adela, at a period which I had flattered myself you would deem so important to our own interests, why must I speak only of the affairs of others?—Are there not a thousand things which it is natural to suppose I must be far more anxious to say and to hear from you?—After a separation so long, so painful and so involuntary, is it not a circumstance of some alarm, to find you thus eager to fly to any subject unconnected with our present feelings, or our future prospects?"

"I begin to perceive," resumed Adela, affecting to look at him somewhat apprehensively, yet unable to conceal a lurking smile, "that you are come hither with a fixed determination to distrust whatever I *do* say, and to reproach me for whatever I do *not* say!—This is a little hard, and almost tempts me to run back to my father to seek from his lips the information which you have now made me half afraid of again soliciting from yours."

"Reprove me—chide me—say to me what

you please; begin only, beloved Adela, by telling me that absence has not weakened your affection!—That my return, my auspicious reception from your father, communicates to you some portion of the exquisite delight it imparts to me!—In short, tell me frankly, generously—nobly tell me, that you are firmly convinced it will be the study of my future life to promote your happiness, and that you participate sincerely in the joy which I experience from your being, at length, permitted to constitute all my own."

Adela, unable to resist the urgency of these entreaties, now, with bright yet glistening eyes, extended towards him her hand, saying—

"I would that the gift were more deserving the value you attach to it! But, take it, dearest Algernon, and let the true affection, the implicit confidence with which it is bestowed, atone for all its other imperfections."

"It has not," cried he, with grateful impetuosity, "the shadow of an imperfection under heaven! It is every thing that the heart of man could wish;—kind, faithful, honourable and undisguised! And the fervent

tenderness with which I prize it, no language can do justice to.—Sweetest Adela, forgive the petulance of my reproaches—the vehemence with which I importuned for this frank avowal.—That you loved me, I had, perhaps, after the generous assurances which you gave me in town, no reasonable cause to distrust:—but allow for the alarm awakened by the prohibition of my letters, so speedily followed by the intelligence of Monthermer's authorized assiduities."—

"Now, however," cried Adela, "that these alarms must either be for ever banished, or utterly incurable, will you, at last, indulge me with some detail of my brother's (*our* brother's) history?"

"Is there any thing which I ought even to permit myself a *wish* to refuse you? Yet—though I have acknowledged your right to my obedience, exact it with mercy, and compel me not, this evening, to be strictly minute in the account you demand."

"Then I really must have recourse to Talbot!—Pray tell me, what is become of him? He would prove much the most satisfactory narrator of the two."

"Possibly he might—it is therefore un-

lucky for you, that business of his own obliged him to go back to town."

"I much question whether you have the humility to think his place very ill supplied! —But at all events, I entreat you not to defer your relation any longer."

"At what part of the strange eventful history must I begin? Not, I hope, at the very first page?"

Oh, yes,—at the very first page!—I can dispense with no one particular connected with the story!"

"Do you know, that this is nothing short of absolute tyranny?—And tyranny, you will recollect, is ever the most infallible promoter of rebellion!—Behold me, then, a rebel declared.—I am in too great a tumult of happiness to engage in a deliberate and circumstantial recital of other people's adventures; it is barbarous to expect it! All I can undertake, is, to answer, in as few words as possible, half a dozen leading questions.—State them, therefore, dearest Adela, as expeditiously as you can."

"This is being, indeed, in open revolt! But to do the best I can with so refractory a subject, let me begin by asking where, when,

and from whom the news of my brother's marriage first reached you?"

"Here are three questions in one, which I shall by no means allow you to compute unfairly in the singular number. When I have answered them, let it be remembered, that, according to agreement, I remain in your debt only for three replies more.—First, then, I heard the intelligence at Mordington-Castle;—secondly, it reached me four mornings since;—thirdly, it was verbally communicated to me by Talbot Cleveland."

Adela now became so earnest for less methodical, but more satisfactory information, that Lord Ennerdale threw aside all raillery, and gave her, without further hesitation, the most clear and accurate account in his power.

He reminded her, that on the first arrival in town of the Dowager Lady Ennerdale, she had accounted for not having brought with her his sister, by acquainting the Annesleys and himself, that she had left her to spend a few weeks at the house of Mr. and Mrs. Bellamont, which they had stopped at in their way, intending, however, only to remain there a single night. The master of

this habitation, a man of large fortune, and very extensive acquaintance, was making sumptuous preparations for the celebration of his son's one-and-twentieth birthday, and collecting, on the occasion, as numerous an assemblage of guests as his spacious residence would contain.

Amongst the rest, soon after the establishment of Miss Mordington in this gay mansion, arrived young Bellamont's particular friend, and one who seemed to be in high favour with both his parents, Julius Cleveland.

Julius and Miss Mordington were personally unacquainted: but they each, from family considerations, had reason to dislike becoming inmates—and each adopted towards the other, a system of studied reserve, and deliberate avoidance.

The Bellamonts exerted their utmost ingenuity to dispel this mutual antipathy. They were partial alike to Miss Mordington and to young Cleveland; and it struck them, that if they could succeed in establishing any thing like amity between two individuals, each so beloved in their respective families, they should be effecting an

act of real usefulness, and preparing the way for the general reconciliation of both the houses.

"Upon this principle," proceeded Lord Ennerdale, "these intermediating powers, put into play their profoundest arts of policy, and brought into action every engine they could employ, to forward their pacific measures. The most effectual of these instruments, I believe, though the one which they could claim the least merit from having provided, was Eudocia's extraordinary beauty. You have seen her, my Adela, and will exculpate me from the charge of mere fraternal vanity when I thus venture to express myself. To these personal attractions, aided, perhaps, by the conciliatory efforts of the Bellamonts, your brother, after a short and ineffectual struggle, imperceptibly began to yield. It was so arranged, that no place was ever vacant for him at table, but one next my sister; no other partner could ever be found disengaged for him to dance with;—if she rode out, he was the first gentleman named by the Bellamonts to escort her.—In short, wherever she chose to go, whatever plan

she proposed, whatever amusement she engaged in, it seemed inevitably decreed that Julius Cleveland should be at her side—that Julius Cleveland was to be its partaker.

"These assiduities, flattering, at first, to Eudocia's vanity only, by degrees, acquired importance in her eyes from softer motives. She spent at Mr. Bellamont's a fortnight in the daily habit of seeing her new captive, in the constant practice of walking, riding, dancing, or conversing with him; and at the termination of that fortnight, it would have been difficult to decide, whether the lady or the gentleman was most in love.

"On the return to town of your brother, with feelings respecting my family and myself so entirely changed, it was a blow to him the severest that could have been inflicted, to hear that I had made proposals which had encountered so unqualified a repulse.—With what hopes of success could he now apply, either to me or to Lady Ennerdale, for the hand of Eudocia? How could he ever bear to confess to his father the revolution which his sentiments had undergone?—the heavy penalty which he

was paying for exciting prejudices against me, now become so detrimental to his own prospects? Was there the smallest chance that Mr. Cleveland would take any steps to forward an union between his son and the sister of him whom he had so imperiously rejected for his daughter?—Julius despaired, and perhaps not unjustly, of being able to instigate his father to so extraordinary a proceeding: and, therefore, relying wholly on the influence which he had obtained over Eudocia, he determined to commit his cause exclusively to her arbitration; to entrust no one with his projects, nor to hazard their success by an application to any human being, either for assistance or counsel.

"Thus stood affairs, when he learnt that she also was now come up from Mr. Bellamont's; that she was in town with Lady Ennerdale, but speedily about to accompany her on a visit to Mrs. Elmer, near Richmond.

"Instantly his imagination, fertile in expedients, suggested to him the plan of inducing your father to take this villa. He had never been introduced to Mrs. Elmer:

but his friends, the Bellamonts, being of the party at her house, he was assured of gaining through their means, frequent opportunities of seeing my sister; and knew, that in all his measures for that purpose, he should, unsolicited, possess in them the readiest abettors. Fortune favoured his views by unexpected circumstances. Lady Ennerdale left Eudocia a week at Richmond whilst she made an excursion to visit an old friend twenty miles distant. During that week he met her almost daily; he even obtained an introduction to Mrs. Elmer, and appeared at the house openly."

"And did Mrs. Elmer receive with favour," said Adela, "one who she could not be ignorant had shewn himself so little your friend?"

"The Bellamonts," answered Lord Ennerdale, "had paved the way for him, and prepared her to view him no longer as my enemy, but as the lover of Eudocia. Mrs. Elmer has no aversion to a little of the consequence attached to being a patroness. She probably concluded also, that in giving countenance to the passion of Julius, she was forwarding my interests; and, no doubt,

as he took infinite pains to recommend himself to her, she soon became well disposed to serve him on his own account. But the necessity of doing this with caution, was apparent; and, therefore, she submitted, though with reluctance, to deny herself the pleasure of again seeking to cultivate your acquaintance."

"Yet why," interrupted Adela, "were they all so afraid of me?"

"Because, my sweet friend, they were averse from putting it into your power to give me any intimation of what was going forward. To confess the truth, I had, at that time, an abhorrence of your brother's disposition (the worst parts only of which were known to me) that would have rendered me as inimical to *his* pretensions, as he had been to *mine*. He had taught me to believe, that fierceness, intolerance, and implacability, were the unextinguishable vices of his nature. Pardon these harsh expressions. I now disown them:—he has nobly redeemed his character with me, and given me every reason to hope that my sister's happiness is in perfect security."

Adela looked sensibly gratified by the

conclusion of this speech, and listened with increasing interest to the sequel of the tale.

"The distrust of my approbation," resumed Lord Ennerdale, "which they both entertained, and which rendered them so cautious of betraying to me their attachment, was founded on such just grounds, that had Julius stepped visibly forward as Eudocia's suitor, I should have exerted every possible means to separate them immediately. True, their marriage might have facilitated my own: but could I be so selfishly regardless of her fate, as to yield her, (solely to promote my own advantage) to a man of whom I fancied myself justified in thinking so ill?—No, dearest Adela; not even to obtain *you*, could I thus inhumanly have sacrificed my sister!—And happy, most happy, ought I to think myself, that I was spared a conflict which could not but have inflicted anguish upon me, in whatever way I had decided it.

"At length, the visit to Mrs. Elmer drew towards a period, and Eudocia informed your brother, that Mordington Castle was decreed to be her next place of residence.

The intelligence threw him into despair!—Under my roof, under my eye, what hope could he preserve of ever seeing her? of ever (without great risk) even hearing from her, or being at liberty to write to her?—He sued perpetually for fresh interviews, to convince her of the necessity of a clandestine union. He urged the certainty of his father's forgiveness, the probability of my concurrence, were the match once effected: but forcibly represented the total hopelessness of obtaining our previous consent.

"The mind of poor Eudocia was cruelly torn by contending sentiments. She loved your brother with a tenderness of which her gay nature seemed scarcely susceptible; she also, most affectionately loved me. The horror which she sometimes felt whilst anticipating the consequences that might result from her compliance—the revival of all that hostility which had formerly been so active between Julius and myself, and the sanguinary scenes to which it might lead, nearly demolished her!

"At this important crisis, Talbot Cleveland, like a guardian spirit, stepped forward to their relief, and became active in

his exertions to guide them through their difficulties.

"He alone, of any of his family, had been admitted into your brother's confidence. He was now written to at his father's country residence, and urgently implored to come up to his friend's assistance. Half shrinking at the responsibility which his compliance would bring upon him, he yet generously defied all hazards, and set forward without delay. Their embarrassments were unreservedly entrusted to him, and their plans fearlessly revealed. He saw that it was too late to employ dissuasive arguments; their purpose was fixed, —the bow was bent,—to aid its shaft in flying with effect, was all that a friend could now hope to perform.

"Lady Ennerdale had given notice, that previous to her departure for Northumberland, it was her intention to spend some days at her house in town. Eudocia was to accompany her; and Talbot strongly recommended, that the elópement on which he now saw her resolved to venture, should take place from thence, rather than from Richmond. It would excite less attention;

and it would certainly remain longer undiscovered by Mr. Cleveland, or by any one invested with authority to pursue and bring them back. To this judicious advice, he added the offer of being their companion on their route to Scotland; not, indeed, the whole way, but as far as it conducted towards Mordington-Castle; within a stage or two of which he proposed to quit them, and be the first to announce to me—to palliate and qualify the errand on which they were proceeding.

"This generous service, my Adela, he faithfully, let me say, even eloquently, performed. From his lips, I learnt the whole detail which I have been giving to you; and to the energy of his warm friendship, is to be attributed the brighter point of view in which I now behold your brother's character. But nothing that the zeal of his representations dictated, weighed with me so powerfully, as the repeated assurances which fell from him, of the unremitting kindness you had experienced from Julius during the period of your residence with him at this place. Talbot dwelt on the subject with a complacency and perseve-

rance not less honourable to his judgment than to his heart; he saw that he had touched the right string;—he saw how gratifying to me, and how effectual in eradicating ancient prejudices, were the instances of fraternal regard which he recounted: and, in policy as well as in friendship, he very justly concluded, that he could scarcely persist too long in multiplying these testimonies of my new brother's worthiness."

"Kind and amiable Talbot!" exclaimed Adela; "How well this office of peacemaker suited his benevolent nature! Did his rhetoric speedily as well as fully prevail?"

"I am not, let me flatter myself, systematically vindictive," replied the Earl; "besides, could I be otherwise than supremely rejoiced to listen to assertions which, coming from such authority, I felt myself so well justified in crediting? The marriage of Eudocia, it was instantly apparent to me, held forth the fairest prospect of accelerating my own happiness: to make it, in all respects, a source of congratulation, I required but to hear that it threatened not

the destruction of hers. We are prompt in believing what we fervently wish. Talbot found me so accessible to conviction, that as soon as our conference ended, he set forward again, indefatigable in the cause he had undertaken, to apprise the adventurous travellers of the result of his mission, and to bring them immediately, at my invitation, to Mordington-Castle."

The softness of Adela's approving smile, as she listened to this information, penetrated Lord Ennerdale with delight and gratitude. Without allowing him, however, to pause in his little narrative, she pressed to hear its conclusion, and he thus went on:

"After the departure of the friendly Quixote, I prepared Annesley and Lady Isabella, who were still my guests, for the unexpected reinforcement to our party which they would soon behold. I then galloped over to Rosedown-Court, to communicate all these wonders to Mr. and Mrs. Somerville, and frankly to confide to them, my fixed determination to await only the arrival of Eudocia and her two companions, ere I took post, and hastened to renew the proposals which I had once before (but

under circumstances so much less propitious) made to Mr. Cleveland. With their accustomed zealous friendliness, they applauded, and most cordially wished success to my purpose; and I left them, in order to be in readiness at the Castle to welcome my coming visitors.

"It was noon the following day ere they arrived. Of Eudocia's embarrassed and diffident countenance, on first meeting my eyes, after the clandestine step in which she had been engaged, it is perhaps scarcely generous to speak. You may easily imagine that the moment must have been painful. The frank affection with which I embraced her, and the heartiness of my felicitations dissipated, in some measure, her confusion, and recalled her banished smiles. But of your brother, my beloved Adela, it is impossible to say too much! His open, manly deportment,—the look of honest conciliation with which he extended towards me his hand,—the sun-shine of joy illuminating his whole aspect,—the gratitude which he expressed towards Talbot, and the tenderness which he manifested for his ill-assured bride,—these alone would have made me

his friend, had no disposition to become such previously existed.

"Our interview, I believe, (impatient as I was to commence my journey) lasted nearly two hours. I informed him whither I was speeding. He gave to my plan the most animated encouragement; was sanguine in predicting from it the happiest result; and, consenting to remain in his present quarters till he heard from me, I commended him to Annesley's care, and sprung with a bounding heart into my chaise."

"And was it Talbot's own proposition to become the companion of your journey?" inquired Adela.

"He was desirous," answered Lord Ennerdale, "to reach home ere any misrepresentations of the part which he had acted could gain access to his father's ear. His object, he said, in accompanying Julius, being accomplished, he had now no motive to defer his return. Hearing him thus express himself, I, of course, offered him a seat in my carriage: but it was not till we entered London, that the thought occurred to me, of soliciting him to proceed hither,

in order to prepare the spirits as well as temper of Mr. Cleveland for my reception."

Lord Ennerdale then concluded his long explanation by stating, that when her father (apprised of his arrival) joined him in the study, a glance sufficed to convince him, that, at length, he was considered as no unwelcome visitor. Talbot was, for some time, the chief orator of the little party. He detailed the whole history of Julius; and ending by an intimation of the aim which had now brought Lord Ennerdale, left him and his uncle to its free discussion, and took his leave.

The conference which ensued was most amicable and satisfactory on both sides. Mr. Cleveland, whose dread had been so intense lest a revival of hostilities between Julius and Lord Ennerdale should have resulted from the recent elopement, seemed now to think that his Lordship's renewed proposals could scarcely be accepted with expressions of too much gratitude, or that their past rejection could be apologized for with too much contrition. The encouragement lately given to Major Monthermer, and the negociations entered into with Lord

Rothbury, had not, he said, proceeded to such lengths, as to render their revocation dishonourable. He had always annexed to his consent a saving clause—an "*if*" of "*much virtue.*" Adela, at the end of the year, was to dispose of her hand only upon the supposition of her willing compliance;—*if* she evinced reluctance, the treaty was to be considered as null and void. This happy, and most provident *if*, Mr. Cleveland seemed to hope, would level all difficulties, and disarm all resentment.

CHAP. XV.

CONCLUSION.

HER father's entrance at length put an end to the confidential dialogue which had so deeply interested Adela's feelings, and so exclusively engaged her every thought.

Whatever drawbacks to esteem, in the opinion of Lord Ennerdale, were the worldly mindedness, the glaring ambition of his destined father-in-law, he was at this

moment too happy, too abundantly satisfied with the favour that had been shewn him, to examine the motive whence that favour sprung with very severe accuracy, or to hesitate in manifesting every symptom of respect which the new situation he was placed in, seemed indispensably to require.

But Adela, in flying towards Mr. Cleveland, to acknowledge in broken accents the full contentment of her heart, and the affectionate thankfulness towards him with which it overflowed, acted from no effort of cold principle, but was solely instigated by impulse and genuine feeling. Her father was in many respects wholly unamiable; but, not more wilfully blind was he to his own defects, than his daughter had scrupulously chosen to remain. The wish to love and revere him had been so persevering, that it had at length effected its own realization. And thus the virtuous propriety with which she had not only subdued in herself, but discouraged in her brother, all propensity to cabal, to censorious retrospections, to irritating murmurs, had obtained its meed, and tended to confirm those sentiments of filial veneration without

which she could have known no happiness under the paternal roof.

After bestowing upon her, with an embrace that proceeded from real regard, a benediction somewhat parading, Mr. Cleveland led her towards Lord Ennerdale, and placing her hand within his, solemnly said—

"I give you, my lord, in this truly excellent young creature, a treasure of which I have but recently learnt to estimate the full value. Make her as happy as she is deserving. I feel convinced that she will not prove less exemplary as a wife than she has been irreproachable as a daughter."

Lord Ennerdale not only believed all this, but ten thousand times more. Yet, there was something ostentatious in the manner of saying it, that repressed the overflowings of his heart, and he could only bow in assenting silence.

It was now near midnight, and it became necessary to settle where the Earl was to seek repose. Nothing called him immediately to London; every thing detained him in the neighbourhood of the villa. Yet as Mr. Cleveland (desirous to avoid whatever might give sudden umbrage to Mon-

thermer and Lord Rothbury) made him no offer of an apartment under his roof, he requested that a servant might be sent to solicit for him a bed at Mrs. Elmer's. The application was successful; and he at length took leave with a heart lightened of every care—almost forgetful indeed that care, " the penalty of Adam," could ever approach him again.

In the subsequent conversations which Adela had now daily opportunities of holding with him, she demanded further explanations of many circumstances that to her were still involved in mystery. Respecting the letters which he had written to her on her first arrival at her father's, she was anxious to know by whom they were directed and forwarded.

" They were always sent," answered he, " under cover to my sister, at Mrs. Elmer's, and she employed her maid to forward them to yours."

" But after I had forbidden Amy to receive them, was it your sister who procured agents to place them upon my dressing-table?"

"One of her principal agents," said he, smiling, "was Julius himself! He has acknowledged to Talbot, that in his anxiety to promote my interest, now so deeply involved with his own, he undertook to deposit safely, or cause to be deposited, every letter which I might entrust to Eudocia's care."

"Then, I presume, that it was likewise Julius who prevailed upon the poor girl whom my father so precipitately dismissed, to attempt insinuating one of these letters under my door?"

"He confesses the heinous fact! But the trifling pecuniary reparation which he put into your hands for her, was not the only one to which his sense of justice urged him. He prevailed upon Eudocia to interest Mrs. Elmer in her behalf, and that lady has taken the banished culprit into her own service."

"I am glad that Julius was so considerate. But there is one thing more, which I am much perplexed to understand. Can you account, Lord Ennerdale, for the singular reserve of Talbot respecting your sister, even

long before Julius became acquainted with her? The first day I ever saw her, he was conducting her to her carriage from a box at the play; and when asked who she was, he absolutely refused telling her name, or any particular relating to her family."

"Talbot was, at the time you speak of," resumed Lord Ennerdale, "undergoing something very like persecution from his mother, in order to induce him to pay to Eudocia the most serious court. He owns that he greatly admired her, but without the smallest wish of ingratiating himself into her favour as a lover; and, I believe, that he was sincerely ashamed of the palpable advances which Mrs. Cleveland condescended to make to her. Eudocia's feelings are a little undisciplined; she extremely disliked Mrs. Cleveland and her daughters, and treated them on all occasions with provoking and cavalier superciliousness. Talbot, modest and undesigning, she esteemed and distinguished: yet so apprehensive was he of furnishing encouragement to his mother's unfounded hopes, that he was as anxious to conceal my sister's gracious acceptance of his dis-

interested attention, as a vainer man would have been anxious to proclaim it: he therefore never mentioned the accidental interviews which he had with her; and when he met her in the presence of any of his family, he always held back, and avoided as much as possible either speaking to, or looking at her.

"How did it happen," said Adela, "that so soon after my arrival in town, your sister should leave it, and that we should never meet again till Julius brought us together in his boat?"

"Lady Ennerdale seldom quits the country till every neighbouring family has deserted her, and she is drawn from it by the dread of complete solitude. Eudocia, therefore, whilst you were at General Cleveland's, was in London without her, and only for a fortnight or ten days, which she passed at Lady Isabella Annesley's. The day after you had seen her, my Adela, she returned (however unwillingly) to my aunt's rural mansion."

"Have you heard from Lady Ennerdale since your sister left her?"

"Talbot and I met her on the road in

our way up to town. She was proceeding in all haste up to Mordington Castle, and was, as you will easily believe, much irritated, and in extreme perplexity. I stopped, and held with her nearly an hour's conference; at our parting, she pursued her intended route with relenting thoughts, and ere this has, I doubt not, bestowed upon her new relation the sincerest and most cordial blessing."

As Lord Ennerdale was now almost domesticated at Mr. Cleveland's, and preparations were openly making for his becoming a declared member of that gentleman's family, it was impossible longer to delay the explanation due to Major Monthermer and to his noble kinsman.

Nothing could be more distressing to Mr. Cleveland than his meditations upon this subject; since, notwithstanding his assurances to Lord Ennerdale, it was but too certain that his engagements with those gentlemen were infinitely more binding

and positive than he had thought it conducive to his reputation to avow.

He decided, at length, upon making his recantation by letter: and accordingly, with a prolixity which at least answered the purpose of puzzling the cause, he stated, that proposals had, during the spring, been made to him for his daughter by Lord Ennerdale, which family reasons, at that time, compelled him to decline. Those reasons no longer subsisted; and the Earl having again applied for his concurrence, he trusted that Lord Rothbury and Major Monthermer would deem him guilty of no dishonourable breach of contract, if he confessed that he now thought himself obliged not to withhold it. With innumerable specious professions of inviolable respect, deep regret, and boundless gratitude, he had the honour to be, &c. &c. &c.

This flimsy attempt at justification was read by those to whom it was addressed with mingled sentiments of indignation and contempt. The Viscount especially, resented it as a proceeding the most treacherous and unworthy. The Major was armed to endure it more patiently by the candid warn-

ing which he had received from Adela; and whatever might be his opinion of the father, he at least vindicated the daughter to Lord Rothbury with the warmest zeal.

No answer was returned to the plausible scroll: and three days after its delivery, Major Monthermer, still retaining his "unhoused free condition," was on his road to Ireland.

Mr. Annesley and Lady Isabella, who came up to be present at the celebration of a marriage, which the former, in particular, had so long earnestly desired, brought intelligence that Julius and his fair partner had quitted Mordington Castle, and were gone on a tour to the Lakes. Lady Ennerdale had likewise withdrawn herself, and retired to her accustomed habitation in Lincolnshire. These departures induced the Earl, immediately after pledging his vows to the loved being whose hand Mr. Cleveland proudly bestowed upon him, to carry her down to that favourite abode of his youth. And Adela, anticipating with joy a meeting with her sister and Mr. Somerville, and impatient to embrace the engaging twins whom she had ever so af-

fectionately loved, set forward on this journey with every earthly blessing in prospect, and every grateful feeling in possession.

The aspiring Alicia, successful in her projects, was united to her wealthy admirer nearly at the same time that Adela, on motives so widely remote from all ambition, contracted her pure and unbought faith to the tried friend of her earliest years.—The succeeding winter, as she foretold, saw the affluent Lady Harley at the height of all fashion—admired, copied, envied,—but (if she had possessed a heart) an object of the truest pity! Married in the bloom of youth to a man twice her own age—dull, unfeeling, selfish—-she found him possessed neither of mental resources, gaiety of temper, nor liberality of spirit to brighten a single hour of her domestic life. She lavished his money with as little veneration for the donor, as she herself excited in those who saw the bawbles on which it was squandered. She filled her house with crouds

of the idle and the dissipated, amongst whom it was not even her aim to procure a friend:—and when they left her, affecting fatigue and indisposition, to emancipate herself from the presence of her husband, she hastened from the room that held him, and thought, (in comparison to his) the society of her waiting-woman a happy exchange.—Often exposing herself to censure, to misrepresentation, to the danger of ruining her fame, she yet had the prudence to remember the fate of Lady Rosalvan, and to check her mad career in time. She had paid too high a price for the wealth and consequence attached to her situation, rashly to forfeit them for the transient *éclat* of an adventure of gallantry; and she knew enough of her own disposition to be aware, that obscurity and disgrace would, to her, be the infallible guides to an early grave. With Sir Patrick, therefore, unloving and unloved, she plodded on through a life of alternate apathy and dissipation—'Was just not' vicious, 'and was just not mad.'

Of the wretched Lady Rosalvan, it was, indeed, justly to be expected that the example should prove, even to a being thought-

less as Alicia, a most awful warning.—The dupe through life of her own unsettled principles, her own restless craving for ideal happiness, she, at length, became their unpitied victim. Her third marriage, considered in every point of view, was debasing and inexcusable. She had no longer the plea of youth to urge in its defence—she had no longer the merit of him whom she chose to assign in its vindication. Norris was of profligate habits, and vulgar, yet not unpretending, manners; his connections, sordid and grasping, were the scourges of Lady Rosalvan's existence. They preyed upon her with the voracity of harpies, and gradually bereaving her of every remaining comfort, sunk her so low, that, in the end, she sought refuge from her own misery in the dreadful resource of inebriation!—This destructive passion, aided by the domestic wretchedness that had given it birth, shortened her erring life, and conducted her to an unhonoured grave before she had attained her forty-second year.

Adela alone, of all who had ever known her, shed a tear to her memory, and lamented her premature fate. She sent for

the worthy Mrs. Temple (that faithful domestic, whose unfeeling dismission had perhaps been one of the severest mortifications to which Lady Rosalvan had been condemned), and appointing her to an easy post in her establishment, befriended and sustained her through life.

Talbot Cleveland, though so generous a contributor to Lord Ennerdale's happiness, was himself cheerless, dispirited, and almost repining for more than a year after Adela's marriage. His hopes had scarcely ever been sanguine—to their object they had never even been revealed; yet their utter annihilation struck a chill to his heart, threw a joyless obscurity over his prospects, which it seemed to him almost impossible that any ray of brightness could penetrate.

The merit and sweetness of Miss Rivers, whom accident first, and by degrees design, brought him frequently into company with, awakened him at length to more animated feelings. The death of the unmarried uncle, whom she had accompanied her mother to visit near Mr. Cleveland's villa, produced so advantageous a change in her circum-

stances, that she became a match for Talbot, equal even to General Cleveland's highest wishes; and on Adela's arrival in London, the second spring of her marriage, she and Lord Ennerdale had the satisfaction of greeting him as a cheerful bridegroom, and of seeing him in grateful possession of all those means of domestic happiness, which he was so well fitted to value and enjoy.

His pitiable sister, the severely-smitten Jemima, doomed to waste her youth, and pine over the decay of her beauty in a chamber of alternate languor and pain, owed every solace of her melancholy fate to the unwearied compassion of the generous Christina. A warm as well as mutual affection in time established itself between them. The better qualities of Jemima's heart, after the first bitterness of her repinings had abated, in this enforced retirement had leisure to expand. She became patient; mournfully, but unaffectedly placid—and for every hour of ease, every testimony of kindness, religiously thankful.

Barbara, wrapped up in self-consequence, callous, though not ill-meaning, useless to

others, but exacting no assiduity for herself, passed through a life of imaginary importance, with as little joy as sorrow, as few expectations or disappointments as ever fell to the lot of human being.

It had been Adela's immediate care, on the return of her father from Sir Thomas Forester's (notwithstanding the painful inquietude of that period), to communicate to William Hampden and his rejoicing family, the news of the old Baronet's relenting disposition, and to congratulate the young soldier on the prospects of worldly prosperity that seemed opening before him. Her letter conveyed as much happiness to Dr. and Mrs. Hampden as to their son. Its exhortation to be expeditious in paying the permitted visit, was with alacrity obeyed. Annabel, weeping herself, was pardoned and embraced with tears of paternal affection. William was enchanted by the reception that was likewise granted to him; and Mrs. Forester, sufficiently punished by the abortive result of her interested scheme, was restored, at the intercession of the generous young couple, to some degree of favour.

William, raised to affluence, forsook not, however, his darling profession; he acquired rank, obtained applause and well-earned fame, and throughout his military, as well as his domestic career, proved himself amply entitled to every honour with which he was distinguished.

Julius Cleveland, united to the being in the world most formed to win and fix him, scarcely retained in his maturity any vestige of the failings that had shaded his earlier years. The impetuosity of his character subsided, yet its spirit and frankness remained. The almost causeless enmity which he had so long inveterately cherished against Lord Ennerdale, was succeeded by a friendship nearly enthusiastic. He grew fond of literature; his taste for domestic society (possessing in his own family so many objects to call it forth) augmented daily. Proud of his charming wife—liberal, animated, and exulting in his own felicity, he was justly regarded by the large circle of connections to which he was allied, as their greatest boast, and most valuable addition.

Adela, good, disinterested, guileless—

with affections the most social—a temper, whose "unclouded ray" shed heart-felt peace on all within its influence—an alacrity in dispensing happiness as lively as the gratitude with which she enjoyed it, found in Lord Ennerdale a companion whose sweetness of disposition, whose genuine warmth of heart, and high cultivation of understanding, gave interest and animation to every hour of her existence. His children she cherished with an unparading affection, that perpetually heightened their father's grateful tenderness for herself; and whatever claims, yet dearer, were subsequently made upon her maternal tenderness, she was too generous to suffer them to interfere with, or to contract the love she had professed for these children of her adoption. Her dependants, and none more than the devoted (and still *insepara-ble)* Amy, adored her. She was the bond of union between her father and her lord—the gayest, the most benevolent, and ever the most unpresumingof human beings.

FINIS.

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